

**Regional Report
UN-GGIM:Americas
2013-2014**



UN-GGIM:Americas

REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF
UNITED NATIONS
ON GLOBAL GEOSPATIAL
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
FOR THE AMERICAS

1. Summary

The Regional Committee, United Nations on Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas (UN-GGIM:Americas) was created in August 2013, replacing the Permanent Committee on Spatial Data Infrastructure for the Americas (PC-IDEA). In its first year the new regional committee has drafted new statutes; created new working groups in line with the resolutions of the 10th United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas (UNRCC-A); continued the cooperation among the institutions¹ of the Joint Action Plan and forged new regional and international relations. Another significant work item has been the planning and execution of a regional project to strengthen the Spatial Data Infrastructure in the Caribbean and to incorporate the Caribbean Member States into the UN-GGIM Americas efforts.

2. Introduction,

On August 23, 2013, the Regional Committee of the UN Global Geospatial Information Management Americas (UN-GGIM:Americas) was created. This new regional body replaces the Permanent Committee for Geospatial Data Infrastructure of the Americas (PC-IDEA). This significant action was done in accordance with resolution seven, adopted at the 10th UN Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas at the UN Headquarters in New York. The name change is in keeping with the regional body's renewed mandate to have increased, close cooperation and coordination with UN-GGIM.

Mr. Stefan Schweinfest, Acting-Director, United Nations Statistics Division in his opening statement at the 10th UNRCC-A noted that "the new regional committee will be aligned to the global architecture, which will better address regional and global challenges especially in the context of sustainable development and humanitarian assistance".

3. Objectives

The Regional Committee shall determine the regional issues relevant to the management of geospatial information. It shall take the necessary action on these issues to maximize the economic, social and environmental benefits resulting from the use of geospatial information based on the member countries' knowledge and exchange of experiences and technologies to enable the development of the Geospatial Data Infrastructure for the Americas. It will also support the strengthening of national initiatives, as well as the progress of the discussions in the UNRCC-A and contribute to the discussions in the United Nations Committee of Experts on the Global Management of Geospatial Information (UN-GGIM).

4. Activities, Areas of Work and Achievements

a. Contribution to UN-GGIM Activities

The Regional Committee functions under the jurisdiction of the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas, so the contributions to the activities of UN-GGIM are directly related to the resolutions. According to the resolutions of the 10th UNRCC-A, the following Working Groups (WG) were developed:

UN-GGIM:Americas' Working Groups	
1.	WG on geospatial data collection and management. Coordinated by Juan Antonio Nieto Escalante, Director General of the Geographic Institute of Colombia Agustin Codazzi. Related to the 2nd resolution "Spatially enabling government through geospatial data collection, management and dissemination." Some of the specific objectives are to promote the integration and use of geospatial information, promote the creation of quality geospatial data and the integration of statistical and geographic information.
2.	WG on access and use of geospatial information in disaster risk reduction and climate change. Coordinated by Rigoberto Magaña Director of the National Institute of Geography and Cadaster of El Salvador. Related resolutions 5th and 6th: "Business cases in support of

¹ "2013-2015 Joint Action Plan to Expedite the Development of Spatial Data Infrastructure of the Americas" – PAIGH, SIRGAS, GeoSUR and PC-IDEA

the creation and use of geospatial Information” and “Access and use of geospatial information for disaster risk reduction and climate change decision making” respectively.
3. WG on promotion and evaluation of Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI). Coordinated by the Executive Secretariat of the National Coordination of Territorial Information (SNIT) of Chile. Related to the 1st and 2nd resolutions: “Regional coordination and cooperation” and “Spatially enabling government through geospatial data collection, management and dissemination” respectively. Some of the specific objectives of this Working Group are creating an evaluation scheme of National SDI, the study operational models and promote the development of SDI in the Caribbean.
4. WG on Standards and technical specifications. Coordinated by the Geog. Carlos Guerrero Elemen, Director General of Geography and Environment of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) of Mexico. This working group has the objectives of collecting and disseminating best practices, technical standards and specifications, the creation of technical standards that complement those developed by international organizations that have that mandate such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC), facilitating the process of selecting and prioritizing them to continue the efforts of PC-IDEA.
5. WG on regional coordination and cooperation. Coordinated by Rolando Ocampo, President of the Regional Committee and Vice President of INEGI Mexico. The work of this WG is related to the first resolution of the UNRCC-A with the same name. Its objectives is to increase, integrate and strengthen the projects developed by and for the region on geospatial information, and strengthen the collaboration and coordination with the institutions of the Joint Action Plan signed by CP-IDEA, the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH), the Geocentric Reference System for the Americas (SIRGAS) and Geospatial Network of Latin America and the Caribbean (GeoSUR); work to integrate and collaborate with the Caribbean region; and promote the collaboration with regional and international organizations, private sector agents and the academic community.

The Committee’s, President has been actively involved in the following activities of UN-GGIM, he is Co-Chair of the Group of Experts on Integration of Statistics and Geospatial Information alongside Gemma Van Halderen of the Australian Bureau of Statistics; collaborates actively in the Working Group of Global Map for Sustainable Development and the Working Group on Trends in National Institutional Arrangements for Geospatial Information Management.

b. Legal and Policy

Statutes UN-GGIM: Americas: the new statutes of the Regional Committee were prepared based on the last PC-IDEA and the UN-GGIM for Asia and the Pacific Regional Committee statutes. The Executive Board of the Regional Committee in consensus, submitted for consideration a draft of the statutes and after consultation with the 24 member countries and the Secretariat of UN-GGIM, the approved statutes were distributed and published in the new website: <http://www.un-ggim-americas.org/> on February 14th, 2014.

New Logo: The new logo of the Regional Committee was created in line with the design of the logos of UN-GGIM for Asia and Pacific, and the Global Committee of Experts.

c. Administrative arrangements

1. Project PAIGH 2013: The PAIGH supported the PC-IDEA project with \$ 8,000 USD for 2013 which were used for air tickets and per diem for the following members of the Regional Committee: Pedro Cabezas Gallegos, Valéria Oliveira Henrique de Araujo and Edwin Santos Guillermo Mansilla to attend the Extraordinary Meeting of UN-GGIM: Americas held at the General Assembly of PAIGH on November, 2013 in Montevideo, Uruguay.

2. Application for PAIGH Project 2015: Project application for financial support for 2015 was sent to the General Secretariat of PAIGH in a timely manner by the President of the National Section of Mexico, Amb. María del Socorro Rovirosa.

3. Collaboration Agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico (SRE) and INEGI. This agreement is intended to be the framework for collaboration between the two institutions, to develop the project of strengthening the Geospatial Data Infrastructure in the Caribbean in the framework of UN-GGIM: Americas Regional Committee. With a fund for the project of \$ 4'500, 000 USD.
 4. Geospatial Media & Communications: This global company focused on working in the field of geospatial technologies and experts in organizing conferences globally, committed with UN-GGIM:Americas to host the first session of the Regional Committee during the Latin America Geospatial Forum in Mexico City in September 2014, Funding has been earmarked to assist 20 members of the Committee to participate in the meeting.
- d. **Publicity and Outreach**
- The Regional Committee has international presence by the participation of the President of the Committee, in various forums listed below:
- Latin America Geospatial Forum, Río de Janeiro Brazil, September 2013.
 - High Level Forum on UN-GGIM Global Map for Sustainable Development, Chengdu, China, October 2013.
 - First meeting of the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical Geospatial Information, New York, November 2013.
 - General Assembly of PAIGH and Extraordinary Meeting of UN-GGIM: Americas, Montevideo, Uruguay, November 2013.
 - UN-GGIM meeting on the Role of Geospatial Information in Measuring and Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals. New York, January 2014.
 - India Geospatial Forum, Hyderabad, India, February 2014.
 - Regional High Level Meeting and the Caribbean Regional Workshop of the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) Caribbean Chapter in St. Maarten, February 2014.
 - 45th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, New York, March 2014.
 - State of Gulf of Mexico Summit 2014 of the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies from the Texas A&M University, Houston, Texas, March 2014.
 - First Workshop for the Caribbean Project, Panama City, Panama, April 2014.
 - MundoGeo #Connect 2014, represented by the Executive Secretary, Mónica Aguayo, Sao Paulo, Brazil, May 2014.
 - Geospatial World Forum, Geneva, Switzerland, May 2014.
 - First Colombian Spatial Data infrastructure Forum, Bogota, Colombia, May 2014.
 - International Workshop Integrating Geospatial and Statistical Information, Beijing, China, June 2014.

In addition, the latest news and advances of the Regional Committee were shared in the GeoSUR Newsletter - News of interest for the geospatial community in the Americas.

5. Partnerships, Regional and International Collaboration

Caribbean Project

Acknowledging the seventh resolution adopted at the Ninth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas, held in New York from 10 to 14 August 2009, which specifically recommended the development of local, national and regional spatial data infrastructures in particularly in the Caribbean, due to the unique geographical position of the region and natural disasters that affect them specifically. In conforming to the first resolution of the 10th UNRCC-A on Coordination and Regional Cooperation, the Regional Committee has developed a project to strengthen the infrastructure for geospatial data management in the Caribbean.

The following are the two objectives of the project:

- Reduce the gap in the management of geospatial information in the countries of the Caribbean region with respect to the other countries of the continent.

- Support the integration and participation of Caribbean countries in the UN-GGIM:Americas initiatives

The development of this project would not be possible without the cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico and with the constant collaboration of the Association of Caribbean States.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico which in its role as President Pro Tempore of the Council of Ministers of the Association of Caribbean States, assumed its responsibility with the region and committed to the Caribbean Project in the frame of the Regional Committee UN-GGIM:Americas, with a budget of about \$ 4'500, 000 USD to be financed by the Government of Mexico.

The objectives of this project will be achieved through four specific actions:

1. **Diagnosis of the geospatial information management in the Caribbean:**
A Diagnosis will be made through a questionnaire that was distributed to the Caribbean Countries. At the first workshop held in Panama City, Panama, in April 2014, the geospatial experts came together and complemented the information reflected in the questionnaire. Also accomplished the preparation of an outline of a work program, a critical path and task distribution. Experts from the following 16 countries attended this workshop: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominique, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, Dominican Republic, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, St. Maarten and Trinidad and Tobago.
2. **Capacity Building:**
Once the Diagnosis from the region is obtained, trainings, workshops and webinars, will be carried out in three main areas: Spatial data infrastructures, Land cover and vegetation classification System and Geospatial information systems.
3. **Infrastructure Acquisition:**
GNSS continuous operating reference stations, computer equipment and telecommunications will be acquired. The aim is to create the Caribbean Geodetic Reference Frame through the strategic allocation of equipment and according to international standards. In addition, a geomatic solution will be developed consisting of hardware, software and integrated procedures, in order to facilitate the analysis and publication of statistical and georeferenced geographical information, which will contribute to regional interoperability and strengthening the Caribbean SDI.
4. **Caribbean Integration to UN-GGIM:**
As part of the Caribbean project and with the propose of incorporating into UN-GGIM: Americas, representatives of the Caribbean countries involved in this effort, will be invited to participate in the 4th session of the Committee of Experts UN-GGIM, to be held in New York from 6 to 8 August 2014. This is being done to integrate them into the regular activities of the Regional Committee and the working groups. They will also be invited to the first session of UN-GGIM:Americas to be held from 22 to 25 September 2014 in Mexico City.

Besides the Caribbean Project, the Regional Committee has been following up on the Join Action Plan between PAIGH, SIRGAS and GeoSUR by diverse meetings and videoconferences which has been creating the paths to follow in the context of geospatial regional cooperation.

The UN-GGIM Secretariat through Cecille Blake, advised on this and other important issues of the Regional Committee during a visit to Aguascalientes, Mexico at the end of 2013.

The Association for experts in Geospatial Information Systems (URISA) has committed to support the project of the Regional Committee in the Caribbean, by sharing lessons learned and geospatial knowledge of the region.

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) has been a fundamental part of the Caribbean Project, the collaboration between the two organizations intends to support the Caribbean to carry out this important task.

Since the event MundoGEO #Connect 2014, the institution has offered cooperation to the Regional Committee on capacity building; updating the news banner on the website of UN-GGIM: Americas; stronger presence in the next MundoGEO #Connect 2015, among others. This is a strategic partnership for wider dissemination and strengthening of the Committee.

6. Perspectives/Outlook, Future Plans

The Regional Committee will participate in the 4th Session of the Committee of Experts UN-GGIM and in the Conference on Statistical and Geographic Information in New York, August 2014.

The first session of the Regional Committee in Mexico City will be held at the Latin American Geospatial Forum from 22 to 25 September 2014.

The Working Groups will continue developing work programs and incorporating the countries, accumulating regional cooperation and achievements in all of them.

7. Conclusion

In its first year of work, the Regional Committee has been defined the critical path to follow in geospatial information management in the Americas for the coming years. The challenge is big and with the cooperation of member countries and institutions committed to this regional effort, the achievements will be satisfactory.

Our gratitude to the representatives of the member countries, the former Executive Secretary of PC-IDEA Valéria Oliveira Henrique de Araujo, the Executive Secretary of the SNIT of Chile for the administration of the website, International and Regional Organizations, Agents of the Private Sector and Academic Institutions that have joined this important project towards developing geospatial capabilities of governments through the collection, management and dissemination of geospatial data to achieve disaster risk reduction and the adoption of decisions on climate change, among other important goals.

Also and finally, thanks to the Secretariat of UN-GGIM for coordinating and leading the global and regional efforts on geospatial information management, working closely with UN-GGIM: Americas.

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