

# **Regional Report UN-GGIM:Americas 2014-2015**



## **UN-GGIM:Americas**

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

**June 26, 2015**

## 1. Summary

The Initiative of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas (UN-GGIM: Americas) was created in August 2013, replacing the Permanent Committee for Geospatial Data Infrastructure of the Americas (CP-IDEA). In the first two years, it has worked in shaping the new regional committee through the development of new statutes; new working groups fulfilling the resolutions of the 10th United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas; to monitor the cooperation between the institutions of the Joint Action Plan and strengthening new regional and international relations. In addition, it has worked in the planning and execution of the project to strengthen the Spatial Data Infrastructure in the Caribbean, in order to incorporate the Caribbean in the efforts of UN-GGIM:Americas Regional Committee.

## 2. Introduction, background

In August 2013, the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas (UN-GGIM: Americas) was created. This new regional body replaced the Permanent Committee for Geospatial Data Infrastructure of the Americas (CP-IDEA). This significant action is in accordance with the new mandate of the regional organization to enhance cooperation and coordination with the Committee of Experts of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM).

Stefan Schweinfest, Director of the Statistics Division of the United Nations in his opening statement at the 10th United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas (UNRCCA), said, "The new Regional Committee will be aligned to a global architecture, which will better address regional and global challenges especially in the context of sustainable development and humanitarian assistance."

## 3. Objective

The Committee shall determine the relevant regional issues for the geospatial information management and will take the necessary action on these to maximize the economic, social and environmental benefits derived from their use. This based on the knowledge and exchange of experiences and technologies of the member states, thereby advancing the establishment of the Geospatial Data Infrastructure in the Americas and national initiatives, in addition to the progress of the discussions at the UNRCCA and contribution to the debates on UN-GGIM.

## 4. Activities, Areas of Work –Achievements

### a. Contribution to UN-GGIM activities

The Regional Committee operates 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 its resolutions, according to the resolutions of the 10th UNRCCA the following Working Groups (WG) of the Regional Committee were developed.

Working Groups	Coordinator	Member Countries
1. WG on geospatial data collection and management	Juan Antonio Nieto y National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia	Colombia, Argentina, Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, Haiti, Granada and St Maarten.
2. WG on access and use of geospatial information for disaster risk reduction and climate change	Rigoberto Magaña-El Salvador	El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Dominica, Guyana, Martinique, Dominican Republic, Chile, Canada Jamaica y Brazil. Organisms: CDEMA

3. WG on Standards and Technical Specifications	Carlos Guerrero-Mexico	Chile, Argentina, Barbados, Colombia, St. Kitts & Nevis, Ecuador, Antigua and Barbuda, Nicaragua, Peru, and Guyana, El Salvador, Panama and Haiti
4. WG on Promotion and Consultancy of Spatial Data Infrastructure.	Álvaro Monett Chile	Chile, Cuba, Dominica, Haiti, Guyana, Peru, Paraguay, Panama, Nicaragua, Jamaica, Ecuador, United States, Granada, Bahamas, Barbados, Canada, Antigua y Barbuda, Martinique, Uruguay y Brazil Organisms: UNGGIM Secretariat, URISA Caribbean Chapter.
5. WG on International Coordination and Cooperation	Rolando Ocampo México	Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, República Dominicana, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Maarten, Suriname y Trinidad and Tobago. Organismos: AEC; INEGI; AMEXCID, CDEMA; URISA Caribbean Chapter; UWI; Universidad de Guyana

During the First Session of the Committee in September 2014 in Mexico City, the working groups' coordinators led sessions with their new members to give continuity for planning objectives, steps and responsibilities distribution.

From that first meeting, the coordinators of the WG have been working together with their members to refine and outline their work actions. One of the main results is the creation of a single questionnaire for the Diagnosis on Geospatial Information Management for the 38 member countries, unifying the questionnaires completed by each group focused on its particular subject.

In order for the Regional Committee to continue to be aligned to the global agenda of UN-GGIM, and with the relevance of the topic of the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information, the decision was made to change the name and objectives of the WG on Geospatial Data Collection and Management to Working Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information. In March of this year, it was sent to members a communication, informing the decision through a letter from the coordinator of the Working Group, the Codazzi and the National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia as well as the new Working Plan and the Terms of Reference. Subsequently, all National Statistical Institutes of the member countries were invited by a letter signed by the President of the Regional Committee, of which the following responses of acceptance were obtained by Statistical counterparties: IBGE Brazil, INE Chile, ONEI Cuba, Department of Statistics and Censuses of El Salvador, ONE Dominican Republic, ABS/GBS Suriname.

At the global level, the President, Mr. Rolando Ocampo has continued its active participation in UN-GGIM activities. As Co-Chairman of the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information (EG-ISGI) with the Australian Bureau of Statistics, carrying conference calls with various members of the Group and conducting the Second Meeting of the EG-ISGI in Lisbon, Portugal in May this year.

#### b. Legal and Policy

To date, the website run by the SNIT of Chile, is currently under migration, it is expected that in the month of July 2015, the site <http://www.un-ggim-americas.org/> will be administered by the INEGI in Mexico, this will facilitate the work of maintaining the site updated by the Executive Secretary.

In March, the Minister of National Assets of Chile, informed the Committee that Mr. Galvarino Melo left his position as SNIT Executive Secretary, pledging continuity of the Vice-Presidency by the nomination of the new Executive Secretary Mr. Alvaro Monett.

#### c. Administrative Arrangements

1. Project PAIGH 2014: The PAIGH supported the UN-GGIM:Americas project with \$ 6,500 USD for 2015 which will be used for carrying out the Second Session of the Regional Committee in November 2015 in Mexico City. In the same way, the project application for support in 2016 for \$ 8,000 USD was made.
2. From the support of \$ 4.5 million USD from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, through the Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID), in this 2015 project activities were aimed at strengthening the Geodetic Network and Capacity Building with an investment of \$1.3 million USD.
3. Geospatial Media & Communications: For the second year agreed with UN-GGIM:Americas to host the second session of the Committee during the Latin America Geospatial Forum 2015 in Mexico City in November, financing assistance of 20 members of the Regional Committee.

#### d. Capacity Development

Under the frame of the Capacity Building stage of the Project for Strengthening of the Spatial Data Infrastructure in the Caribbean, it was carried out the first training course on Geodesy, taught by Dr. Keith Miller, Professor of the University of the West Indies (UWI), which was conducted in Aguascalientes, Mexico, from December 8th to 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

At the 5th session of UN-GGIM in New York, training in Geospatial Standards will be carried out and will be taught by Trevor Taylor of the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC), August 2nd and 3rd 2015.

Currently training alternatives are been analyzed in terms of priorities and major needs of States and Territories of the Caribbean region. There are some tentative courses that include topics such as: Practical Geodesy, Remote Sensing, Spatial Data Infrastructure and Use of Free Software for Web Applications.

#### e. Publicity and Outreach

The Regional Committee has international presence by the participation of the President of the Committee, Mr. Rolando Ocampo in the following international forums:

1. Meeting with Organization of American States (OAS) to present UN-GGIM:Americas Caribbean Project, Washington, DC United States. October 1st to 3rd 2014.
2. 3rd High Level Forum on Global Geospatial Information Management and visit to the regional offices of the NASG. Beijing and Xi'an, China. From October 22 to 27.
3. 45° Meeting of the Directing Council of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, Santiago de Chile. November 11th to 13th 2014; represented by the Executive Secretary, Monica Aguayo.
4. V Iberian Conference of Spatial Data Infrastructures (JIIDE). Lisbon, Portugal. November 5th to 7th 2014

5. Meeting with the Rector of the University of the West Indies St. Augustine and Keynote Presentation. Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. February 2nd 2015.
6. Meeting of the Technical Committee of the UN-GGIM and Caribbean Territorial Information Platform for Disaster Prevention (PITCA). Panama City, Panama. February 12th to 14th 2015.
7. XX Regular Meeting of Ministerial Council of the Association of Caribbean States. La Antigua, Guatemala. March 10th, 2015
8. 33rd GEO Executive Committee Meeting. Geneva, Switzerland. March 19th to 20th 2015
9. Meeting for MoU signing of UN-GGIM:Americas Caribbean Project within the framework of the First Regional Meeting of Caribbean Territorial Information Platform for Disaster Prevention (PITCA) and Meeting with Chancellor of Barbados. Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago and Bridgetown, Barbados. From March 25 to 27 2015.
10. Expanded Strategic UN-GGIM Bureau Meeting. Hangzhou, China. May 4th to 6th 2015.
11. X Conference on Spatial Data Infrastructure of Argentina (IDERA). Province of Mendoza, Argentina. May 14 and 15, 2015.
12. Geospatial World Forum. Lisbon, Portugal. May 25 to 29 2015.
13. 60th. World Statistics Congress ISI. Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. From July 26 to 31, 2015.
14. 5th Session of UN-GGIM. New York, USA. August 1st to 8th 2015.

f. Technical

The Caribbean Project is divided into three main actions: Diagnosis, Capacity Building and Infrastructure Acquisition.

The first phase of the Caribbean project was based on an analysis of the spatial data infrastructure status in the 18 participating countries. After sending the questionnaire in early 2014, the responses of the countries, which were used for diagnosis of the region and to identify its main strengths and needs, as well as to outline more specifically, the actions to be obtained of the project.

Regarding the second phase of the Caribbean Project, as already mentioned the Geodesy Course was performed and the one on Standards will be carried out in New York this August.

For the third stage of the project regarding Infrastructure Acquisition, there are plans to purchase equipment for the strengthening of the geodetic network in the region, in addition to the construction of a Land Cover map, for which there were acquired in December 2014, RapidEye Satellite Imagery covering 220.474 km<sup>2</sup> of the 16 island countries and territories in the region, the pixel size images is 5 m and has 5 color bands, suitable for a Land Cover map, which will be delivered to the countries.

In this sense, as a result of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between INEGI and NASG of China, NAGS is providing Satellite Images of the following characteristics: panchromatic band of 2.5-3 meter spatial resolution; multi-spectral resolution band of 6 meters each scene covering on average 50x50 km; The volume of each image is 2.7 GB, this for the following Caribbean countries: Barbados; St. Maarten; St. Lucia; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Trinidad and Tobago; Bahamas; Dominica; Grenada; Martinique; Antigua and Barbuda and Guadeloupe. Which will contribute to the creation of the land cover map.

Given the integration of the Caribbean region to UN-GGIM:Americas and the creation of new working groups, it was decided to conduct a diagnosis of the geospatial information management across the continent. The coordinators of the working groups, made each module of the questionnaire, asking questions to find out the status of countries in the field of study and work in their group. Once compiled the questions to ask, a joint questionnaire was prepared, which will be distributed for response in June 2015.

#### **4. Partnerships and Regional and International Collaboration.**

Collaboration Agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico (SRE) through AMEXCID and INEGI: This agreement has been the framework for collaboration between the two institutions to develop the Project for Strengthening the Spatial Data Infrastructure in the Caribbean under the UN-GGIM:Americas Regional Committee.

Under the Caribbean Project framework, was decided to create a Technical Committee formed by: The Association of Caribbean States (ACS); INEGI; Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID); Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management (CDEMA); URISA Caribbean Chapter; University of Guyana and University of West Indies. Decisions are taken together for the project, taking into account their knowledge of the Caribbean Region, Geospatial Information and International Cooperation. The Technical Committee held its first meeting in Panama City in February 2015, where issues such as the Work Plan of the initiative and the Project; the next training workshops; Geomatics platform for geospatial data sharing in the Caribbean; among others, were discussed.

In March of this year, Rolando Ocampo attended the University of the West Indies (UWI) in order to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the University, where it was agreed to host the data center of the Caribbean Project in its campus, a step in the project infrastructure acquisition.

On that same trip to Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Ocampo participated in the meeting of the Caribbean Territorial Information Platform for Disaster Prevention PITCA in order to comply with the resolutions of the XVI Summit of Heads of State of the Association of Caribbean States, in which the Government of Mexico offered the cooperation projects of PITCA and the Caribbean Project; in order to integrate their projects in a geomatics solution deliverable for the Caribbean.

Mr. Ocampo has made several tours of duty in the Caribbean region, where they have delivered satellite images to the Foreign Affairs Minister of Barbados, Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago.

In November 2014, within the 45 Meeting of the Directing Council of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, was held a joint meeting between representatives of PAIGH, SIRGAS, GeoSUR and UN-GGIM:Americas, where subjects were treated regarding the progress of cooperation they have had and the main plans for the following year, additionally, a Joint Action Plan Commitment Document between PAIGH, SIRGAS, GeoSUR, and UN-GGIM:Americas was signed where the purpose of manifests is to strengthen, harmonize and accelerate in a coordinate and effective way the SDI development in the Americas, being PAIGH the link between this international organizations, facilitating cooperation processes. The importance of harmonizing the work plans of the 4 bodies, in order to avoid duplication, through annual reviews of the plans was considered.

Geospatial Media & Communications has been another important partner for UN-GGIM: Americas, with which it has signed a collaboration agreement alongside INEGI to carry out the Second Latin America Geospatial Forum in Mexico City in November 2015, during this important Forum the second session of UN-GGIM:Americas will be held with the joint support of the Caribbean Project, Geospatial Media and INEGI to invite the 38 member countries to participate, with the necessary funds to cover trip expenses.

#### **6. Priority Issues and Challenges**

For UN-GGIM:Americas, one of the priority issues as mandated by the 10th United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas, is to continue the integration of the Caribbean Region to the activities of UN-GGIM and UN-GGIM:Americas, this through the continuity and sustainability of the Caribbean Project, ensure that the acquired infrastructure and capacity built will be sustainable in time for the 18 countries involved.

Another important objective of the Regional Committee is the active participation of member countries in Working Groups, recognizing their great potential in priority areas for Geospatial Information Management in the Americas.

These two priorities become the main challenges of the Regional Committee, ensure continuity and active participation of representatives of member countries, the political support of their countries, financial support for meetings of the Committee and its Working Groups, among others.

## **7. Perspectives and Future Plans.**

The immediate plan for the Regional Committee are the activities to be carried out within the framework of the 5th Session of UN-GGIM in New York City in August 2015, including a training course on standards for Caribbean countries and two side events of the Regional Committee, one aiming to be a prior meeting to the 2nd Session of the Regional Committee and the other to show the progress and future plans of the Caribbean Project.

On November 11th and 12th the second session of UN-GGIM:Americas will be held in Mexico City, under the Latin American Geospatial Forum, the program includes the progress and activities of this year; regional and international cooperation; working groups progress; future plans for the Regional Committee, among others.

The Caribbean Project work program includes actions and future training courses on Practical Geodesy, Remote Sensing, Spatial Data Infrastructure and use of Free Software for Web Applications; and the purchase of computer equipment for the creation of geomatics solution that allows for a Digital Map of the Caribbean, this will contribute to the interoperability of geospatial data in the region. In addition, the acquisition of 14 geodetic stations for strengthening the Caribbean Geodetic Network, is priority for the project and to the Regional Committee, this acquisition process has already started and it is expected to have stations, installation and training in the short term.

The Working Groups coordinators of the Regional Committee will analyze and use the results of the questionnaire sent to all member countries to create a joint diagnosis of Geospatial Information Managing and outline the committee's future actions, giving priority to reduce the gaps between countries.

## **8. Conclusions**

The Regional Committee is in a consolidation phase in which the support of all member states is needed, they have made great strides in a short time and the main challenge is to keep pace and achievements as a region.

There are some key players for the exponential growth experienced by UN-GGIM:Americas, regional and international agencies and the Government of Mexico through AMEXCID, for the support and encouragement to the Caribbean Project and the difference it will do to the Region's Spatial Data Infrastructure.

At the inside of the Committee, has been fundamental the active role of the Vice-President of the Regional Committee, represented by Álvaro Monett, which has served as an active coordinator of the Working Groups tasks and a key to the development of the region's General Diagnosis and the support of his team in recent years with the management of the website of the Regional Committee, which will be given to INEGI in Mexico in the coming weeks.

Some representatives of member countries that have been active with highly responsible activities, including the coordinators of the Working Groups, representatives of Geographic Institute Agustín Codazzi and the National

Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia; Geographic Institute and the National Registry of El Salvador; National Territorial Information System of Chile; and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico.

To all of them, our recognition and gratitude

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