

# UN General Assembly Urges the Sharing of Geospatial Data to Benefit People and Planet

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the UN resolution on a Global Geodetic Reference Frame for Sustainable Development on 26 February 2015. This is one concrete example of an outcome from UN-GGIM, in which FIG has been active, and both FIG and IAG are mentioned in the final resolution text. Last year at the FIG Congress in Kuala Lumpur, the work of UN-GGIM was highlighted on a number of occasions and the resolution was discussed in the plenary sessions, in technical sessions as well as in a FIG-facilitated meeting. The outcome was a FIG Statement that was adopted by the UN-GGIM-AP Executive Board at its meeting during the XXV FIG Congress. The statement expresses the importance of the resolution and at the General Assembly the FIG member organisations were urged to take the statement home to the respective countries.

The science that supports the precise pinpointing of people and places should be shared more widely, according to the United Nations General Assembly as it adopted its first resolution recognising the importance of a globally coordinated approach to geodesy: "The discipline focused on accurately measuring the shape, rotation and gravitational field of planet Earth. Geodesy plays an increasing role in people's lives, from finding disaster victims to finding directions using a smartphone".

The General Assembly resolution, titled 'A Global Geodetic Reference Frame for Sustainable Development', outlines the value

of ground-based observations and remote satellite sensing when tracking changes in populations, ice caps, oceans and the atmosphere over time. Such geospatial measurements can support sustainable development policymaking, climate change monitoring and natural disaster management, and also have a wide range of applications for transport, agriculture and construction.

Emphasising that "no one country can do this alone", the General Assembly called for greater multilateral cooperation on geodesy, including the open sharing of geospatial data, further capacity building in developing countries and the creation of international standards and conventions.

Co-sponsored by 52 Member States, the resolution was originally put forward by Fiji. Ambassador Peter Thomson, Fiji's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, explained that, as a small island developing State, Fiji is vulnerable to increasingly severe natural disasters, sea-level rise and other problems triggered by climate change, but uses geodesy data to plan as best as it can.

Wu Hongbo, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, praised Member States' efforts to "discuss, deliberate and decide on issues relevant to positioning geospatial information," and noting that geodesy is fundamental for monitoring changes to the Earth, stressed "the significance of the global geodetic



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reference frame in supporting sustainable development".

FIG is pleased that the resolution has now been adopted and would like to ask all member organisations to note that the work continues to realise a roadmap for the implementation of the resolution. 2015 is a crucial year in which world leaders will be called upon to determine the global course of action to improve people's lives and protect the planet. With key finance, sustainable development and climate change conferences approaching, the focus on practical solutions and international cooperation in today's resolution sets the right tone.

For more information: Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management and the Working Group on Global Geodetic Reference Frame. ◀

#### More information

<http://ggim.un.org>  
[http://ggim.un.org/UN\\_GGIM\\_wg1.html](http://ggim.un.org/UN_GGIM_wg1.html)  
[www.fig.net](http://www.fig.net)



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