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**Economic Commission for Africa**  
**Regional Committee of United Nations Global**  
**Geospatial Information Management for Africa**  
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**Presentation of reports****Review of the activities of the executive working groups  
and thematic networks of the Regional Committee of  
United Nations Global Geospatial Information  
Management for Africa****I. Introduction****A. Background**

1. The United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management was initiated to improve the availability, accessibility and quality of geospatial information for decision-making and planning across the globe. The Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa recognizes the importance of geospatial information management for sustainable development across Africa.
2. The Regional Committee created working groups and thematic networks to focus on areas directly affecting geospatial development, in particular the main areas related to the management and governance of geospatial information in Africa. Formed by experts and stakeholders from across the continent, they are essential components of the Regional Committee's efforts to improve geospatial information management in Africa.
3. The working groups are tasked with developing and implementing strategies and plans that support the overall objectives of the Regional Committee. They are also expected to provide guidance and technical support to members of ECA on various aspects of geospatial information management, including data acquisition, analysis and dissemination.
4. The thematic networks focus more on specific topics and issues, such as land administration, disaster management and spatial data infrastructure. The networks are designed to foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing among experts in these areas and to support the development and implementation of policies and strategies related to these issues in Africa.

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## **B. Justification and scope of work**

5. The working groups and thematic networks serve as crucial platforms for exchanging knowledge and best practices and for promoting collaboration among members of ECA and stakeholders. Their activities include developing policies and standards and providing capacity-building and technical support to members of ECA. They also promote awareness and understanding of geospatial information management and its role in decision-making. The activities are essential for advancing geospatial information management (production, analysis and dissemination) in Africa.

6. Owing to the experiences of the other regional committees, the number of working groups and thematic networks was initially limited and their scope was defined according to what it was possible for them to achieve within specified time frames and what would be most beneficial to the work of the Regional Committee. For various reasons, however, most of the working groups did not fulfil their mandate satisfactorily. A review was therefore necessary to ensure that they became more effective, they aligned their policies with current priorities, and they adapted to emerging challenges. The ultimate goal was to improve the results of the groups by revitalizing them, thus enhancing the work of the Regional Committee and strengthening geospatial information management in the region. To achieve this, the review would address such aspects as the groups' composition and structure, their strategy, their outcomes, their workplans, their coordination and collaboration and their decision-making processes.

7. The purpose of the present report is to provide an overview of the review process, the key findings and the recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and relevance of the Regional Committee's working groups and thematic networks.

## **II. Restructuring the working groups and thematic networks**

8. Restructuring the working groups and thematic networks of the Regional Committee for Africa to better address the geospatial information management challenges and needs of the continent required a comprehensive and strategic approach.

9. A comprehensive literature review was carried out and existing working groups and thematic networks were assessed to identify their mandates, objectives, membership, structure, activities, communication and achievements, among other aspects. In addition, feedback was obtained from stakeholders (including members of ECA, the Executive Board and secretariat of the Regional Committee, conveners of working groups) through surveys, interviews and consultations with key resource people and experts, and gaps were identified. This feedback made it possible to examine strengths and weaknesses and to evaluate how effectively each group conducted its activities and what the total impact of the activities was on geospatial information and technology development in Africa.

10. Thanks to this process, new recommendations were put forward that aligned with the Regional Committee's objectives and the specific needs of the continent in terms of geospatial information. In addition, new terms of reference were developed for the restructured working groups and thematic networks; guidance was provided on the role of the private sector and academia in the activities of the working groups; and guidance was provided on reporting mechanisms to improve the implementation of the Regional Committee's work programme.

## C. Method for reviewing the activities of the working groups and thematic networks

11. The review of the working groups and thematic networks was conducted in five phases:

(a) An in-depth assessment of the working groups and thematic networks to take stock of their current operations, and consultations with stakeholders to gather their perspectives and identify their needs, priorities and concerns;

(b) Strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities were identified for the existing groups. Issues faced in the sector and best practices in the field were also identified, and a method was proposed for the implementation of high-performance working groups and thematic networks capable of meeting the strategic needs of the Regional Committee;

(c) Terms of reference were developed for each group that would constitute the specifications to be executed under the auspices of the Executive Board of the Regional Committee;

(d) The roles of the private sector and academia in the activities of the working groups and thematic networks were analysed and guidance was provided;

(e) Advice was provided on reporting mechanisms to improve the implementation of the Regional Committee's work programme.

## D. Assessment and review of the performance of the working groups and thematic networks

12. This activity was essentially carried out in two stages:

### 1. An exhaustive and in-depth literature review to determine best practices in the operationalization of working groups and thematic networks, both within and outside the global network (the Committee of Experts and the regional committees)

13. Working groups and thematic networks are the functional or operational units of the Regional Committee for Africa. Set up to act as the linchpin of the Regional Committee, the working groups and thematic networks work to advance the Regional Committee's agenda, including by implementing recommendations and other decisions made at its annual sessions.

14. Given their limited resources and the diverse and multifaceted challenges that they face, the working groups and thematic networks cannot do everything at once. Their targets should therefore be limited and prioritized. Furthermore, the number of working groups should be reduced to ensure that they can be properly managed with the resources available, and better targeted to ensure that the continent's most pressing concerns are addressed.

15. An extensive literature review was carried out to identify best practices for working groups and thematic networks dealing with geospatial information. The organization charts used for geospatial information by countries, regional and international bodies, associations, geospatial communities and other entities were reviewed. The key lessons outlined below show that many of the best operational practices that need to be in place for working groups and thematic networks to be effective apply across various levels.

16. At the national, regional and global levels, it was observed that performance-driven working groups and thematic networks generally strive:

(a) To include representatives of various stakeholders, including government agencies, industry experts, academic institutions and non-profit organizations;

(b) To establish regular communication channels to ensure effective coordination and collaboration among working group and thematic network members;

(c) To organize training sessions, workshops and knowledge-sharing events to enhance the skills and expertise of working group and thematic network members;

(d) To recognize the evolving nature of geospatial technology and anticipate emerging challenges;

(e) To review their progress regularly and evaluate their effectiveness in achieving their objectives.

17. In addition, high-performance groups at the regional and global levels will also endeavour:

(a) To ensure alignment with national initiatives and strategies on geospatial information management;

(b) To organize regional training programmes, workshops and knowledge-sharing events to enhance the geospatial capacity of ECA members;

(c) To explore opportunities for sharing and pooling resources among regional organizations to optimize the use of financial, technical and human resources;

(d) To encourage public-private partnerships to leverage the expertise and resources of both sectors in geospatial information management at the regional or global level;

(e) To establish a global coordination mechanism to facilitate the collaboration, coordination and governance of geospatial information management efforts;

(f) To implement any necessary adjustments or changes to maximize the group's impact.

18. A comparative analysis of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management and the network of regional committees reveals the following information:

(a) The regional committees of Africa, the Americas and Europe each have five functional working groups and two thematic networks, while the regional committees of the Arab States and Asia and the Pacific have four operational working groups and no thematic networks;

(b) The Committee of Experts has eight operational working groups and four thematic networks (the Private Sector Network, the Academic Network and Geospatial Societies);

(c) All regional committees and the Committee of Experts have a working group on geodesy and a working group on the integration of statistics and geospatial information;

(d) Only the Committee of Experts and the Regional Committee for the Americas have a working group on geospatial information and services for disasters;

(e) The Committee of Experts and the Regional Committee for Asia and the Pacific both have a working group on land administration and management;

(f) Of the five regional committees, only the committees for Africa and the Arab States have no working group on the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework;

(g) The Regional Committee for the Americas is the only regional committee with a working group on spatial data infrastructure;

(h) Only the Regional Committee for Europe and the Committee of Experts have a working group on the Sustainable Development Goals;

(i) Only the regional committees for Africa and the Arab States currently have a working group on fundamental geospatial data sets (the Regional Committee for Europe and the Committee of Experts abolished their groups on fundamental geospatial data sets);

(j) Although the Regional Committee for Africa has separate working groups for institutional and legal arrangements on the one hand and capacity and capability development on the other, and the Regional Committee for Europe has a working group on data strategy and policy, the Regional Committee for the Arab States has a single working group covering all three topics;

(k) The Committee of Experts has the Working Group on Geospatial Information for the Marine Environment and the High-level Group of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, but none of the regional committees has a working group covering geospatial information.

19. The working groups and thematic networks of the various regional committees are listed in a table provided in the annex.

## 2. Assessment of the status of the working group and thematic network activities

20. A survey was carried out among relevant experts in the Executive Board and secretariat and among conveners and members of the Regional Committee for Africa working groups and thematic networks. In addition, a few key experts were targeted for person-to-person interviews to ensure diversity and inclusiveness. The survey was based on a series of 30 questions linked to 15 themes, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1

### Survey of the status of the working groups and thematic networks of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa

| <i>Assessment criteria</i>   | <i>Questions submitted</i>   |
|--|--|
| Composition and structure  | Are all relevant stakeholders represented in the working group and is the group sufficiently diverse in terms of expertise and range of perspectives?<br>How is the working group structured and are roles and responsibilities clearly defined? |
| Objectives and terms of reference                                  | Are the purpose and objectives of the working group clearly established?<br>Does the working group have clear terms of reference?  |
| Alignment with the objectives of the Regional Committee for Africa | Are the activities of the working group in line with the overall objectives of the Regional Committee for Africa?<br>How does the working group help to achieve these objectives?  |
| Participation, collaboration and coordination                      | Does the working group collaborate effectively with other internal and external stakeholders?<br>To what extent does the working group involve various stakeholders in its activities?   |
| Regular meetings   | How often does the working group organize meetings to discuss progress, share updates and address challenges?<br>How are such meetings held (in person, online or a combination of both)?  |

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Agenda and meeting minutes         | Is an agenda (with topics, discussions, decisions and action items) systematically developed for each meeting and distributed in advance to all members of the working group?<br>Are minutes subsequently prepared and shared with all members for reference and review after each meeting?                |
| Decision-making process            | Does the working group have a clear process for making decisions (e. g. by voting, consensus or another agreed-upon method)?<br>To what extent are the decisions taken transparent, documented and communicated to all members?  |
| Task assignment and accountability | To what extent does the working group define specific tasks, with clear objectives and deadlines, and to what extent does it assign such tasks to its members?<br>Is progress on the completion of such tasks regularly reviewed and monitored?  |
| Results and impacts                | What are the concrete results of the working group's activities since its inception?<br>What impact do the results have on members of ECA in particular and on geospatial information management in Africa more generally?   |
| Project management and execution   | How are the activities of the working group planned and carried out?<br>Are the necessary resources (human, financial and technical) available to ensure that the activities are carried out adequately?   |
| Quality of deliverables            | Is the output of the working group (methods, reports, standards, guidelines, best practices, etc.) of high quality?<br>Are the products or deliverables relevant and useful to members of ECA and other stakeholders?  |
| Communication and dissemination    | How does the working group report on and share the results of its work?<br>What communication channels and tools are used, and how efficient and effective are they?   |
| Capacity-building                  | To what extent does the working group contribute to capacity-building in geospatial information management in Africa?<br>What initiatives are in place to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and skills?  |
| Stakeholder engagement             | How often and effectively does the working group engage with its own members and other potentially relevant stakeholders?<br>Are there any other potential stakeholders that should be included in the engagement efforts?   |
| Evaluation and review              | Are there any mechanisms in place to monitor and periodically evaluate the progress and impact of the activities of the working groups and thematic networks' against its objectives?<br>What improvements or adjustments can be made to ensure that the working group's progress and impact are measured? |

21. The ultimate goal of the assessment was to take stock of how the existing working groups and thematic networks were functioning, in particular in terms of their mandates and objectives; their membership composition; the way they plan their activities and conduct their work; their collaboration, coordination and information-sharing; their decision-making processes; their main communication tools; and the way in which they monitor and evaluate the activities they had already carried out and those that they were carrying out at the time.

## **E. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and a recommended method for establishing working groups and thematic networks**

22. The cross-referencing and critical analysis of all the information gathered through the literature review and the survey carried out with the relevant stakeholders led to several findings.

## 1. Key achievements of the working groups and thematic networks

23. The only groups that made tangible achievements were the Working Group on Fundamental Datasets and Standards, the Working Group on Institutional Arrangements and Legal Frameworks and, to a lesser extent, the Working Group on the African Geodetic Reference Frame.

24. The Regional Committee for Africa, by contrast, has remained very active over the past few years, with its secretariat achieving concrete goals thanks to its tireless efforts to sustain geospatial information management on the continent. Among its significant achievements, the secretariat has:

(a) Defined and determined the specifications of fundamental geospatial data sets for Africa to improve the reliability and accuracy of geospatial data and their use and reuse;

(b) Strengthened national mapping and geospatial institutions through major efforts to support the development of geospatial policies, strategic frameworks and national spatial data infrastructure in many countries;

(c) Developed capacity-building programmes and organized numerous workshops, conferences and training sessions to enhance the technical expertise and knowledge of geospatial professionals in Africa;

(d) Increased awareness of the value and importance of geospatial information to address various societal challenges;

(e) Actively engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, industry, academia and regional and international organizations;

(f) Cooperated with geospatial and other organizations in Africa and the rest of the world to share experiences, lessons learned and best practices.

## 2. Issues and challenges hindering the development of the working groups and thematic networks

25. The significant obstacles to the activities of the working groups and thematic networks include the following:

(a) A shortage of financial resources, devoted staff and technical resources, making it impossible for them to support capacity-building initiatives effectively;

(b) Ineffective and inefficient coordination and communication among the various groups of stakeholders;

(c) A lack of awareness of geospatial information among members of ECA, resulting in limited commitment and participation;

(d) A failure to maintain momentum and continue with activities after specific initiatives and a failure to implement and follow up on recommendations stemming from meetings of the Regional Committee;

(e) The difficulty keeping pace with technological advances and adapting new technologies and tools and integrating them into the workflows of the working groups.

26. Because of these major challenges, the working groups and thematic networks are not well aligned with global best practices.

## 3. Strengths to be consolidated, weaknesses to be overcome, opportunities to be seized and threats to be countered

27. The main conclusions from the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are presented in section II.2. The purpose of the conclusions is to facilitate key decisions so that a new implementation method can be developed for a new model in which working groups and thematic networks are more effective.

## F. Development of terms of reference for each working group and thematic network

28. Following the in-depth assessment of working groups' and thematic networks' operations and the analysis of all the information gathered during the review, new terms of reference were developed to guide the restructuring of the working groups and thematic networks.

29. The proposed new terms of reference are based on the previous ones, but with more detailed specifications. They clearly state the need for the working groups and thematic networks to have a broader geographical representation and wider range of expertise. They also state that responsibilities and activities should be well defined and advocate a solid communication and reporting mechanism and good planning and organization of work.

30. Using the African Geodetic Reference Frame as an example, Table 2 outlines the main aspects that should be addressed when the working groups and thematic networks are restructured.

Table 2

### Proposed terms of reference of the Working Group on the African Geodetic Reference Frame

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Main objective                       | To address the development, promotion and implementation of the African Geodetic Reference Frame and to ensure the availability, accuracy and accessibility of a robust geodetic reference frame for Africa.  |
| Membership composition and structure | The working group will be headed by a Chair and assisted by a Vice-Chair, both selected from among the representatives of members of ECA, and its members will be as follows:<br>Representatives of national geospatial and mapping agencies in Africa;<br>Experts in geodesy, surveying and geospatial information science and technology;<br>Representatives of relevant international and regional organizations academia and the private sector;<br>Secretarial support from ECA.   |
| Activities                           | The working group will endeavour:<br>To review and assess the status of geodetic reference systems in African countries, identifying gaps and challenges;<br>To develop guidelines and best practices or standards for the establishment, maintenance and use of the African Reference Frame in coordination with the International Association of Geodesy and the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence;<br>To coordinate the implementation of the African Reference Frame project at the continental level, including by growing the network of continuously operating reference stations and by establishing and monitoring data centres and a data analysis centre;<br>To ensure that the African Reference Frame is aligned with the Global Reference Frame;<br>To provide technical advice and support to members of ECA, in conjunction with the regional centres, the International Association of Geodesy, the Global Centre of Excellence and other stakeholders, to help them to align their national geodetic systems with the African Reference Frame and to improve and maintain appropriate national geodetic infrastructure, thus enhancing the African Reference Frame;<br>To raise awareness of the African Reference Frame and demonstrate its value among political groupings, in particular the African Union, and among stakeholders, international organizations and other users;<br>To encourage relevant regional organizations such as the African Union, regional economic communities, stakeholders and other international organizations to recognize and endorse the African Reference Frame;<br>To facilitate the development and implementation of capacity-building programmes and initiatives for members of ECA in geodesy and related fields;<br>To coordinate and promote geodesy data-sharing, quality standards and interoperability among national mapping agencies in Africa; |



|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
|                 | <p>To organize, in conjunction with the regional centres, workshops, seminars and other training events for members of ECA and members of the working group;</p> <p>To secure funding, equipment and other resources to ensure the success of the African Reference Frame;</p> <p>To collaborate with such international partners as the International Association of Geodesy, the Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence, regional bodies and centres, the Subcommittee on Geodesy of the Committee of Experts, and stakeholders of the Global Reference Frame to leverage expertise, funding and support for the African Reference Frame;</p> <p>To support members of ECA, in conjunction with the regional centres, in developing and implementing outreach programmes for the private sector to appreciate the usefulness of the national, regional and global geodetic reference frames;</p> <p>To monitor and evaluate the implementation of the African Reference Frame and deliver periodic reports to the Regional Committee for Africa;</p> <p>To undertake any other activities that are relevant to the activities of the working group.</p> |
| Reporting       | <p>The working group will report to the Executive Bureau of the Regional Committee for Africa, providing periodic updates on its activities, progress, challenges and recommendations. The Chair, with the support of the Vice-Chair and the secretariat, will coordinate and monitor the activities of the working group and report on them to the Regional Committee for Africa. The working group will present a written report and deliver a presentation on the progress of its activities at the annual sessions of the Regional Committee.</p>   |
| Methods of work | <p>The working group will hold regular meetings, either online or in person, to discuss the group's progress, share experiences among its members and plan activities.</p> <p>Communication within the working group will be facilitated through official channels and platforms, as designated by the secretariat of the Regional Committee.</p> <p>The working group may establish subgroups or task teams to address specific issues, as deemed necessary, and the subgroups or task teams must report on their progress and on the delivery of their work to the Chair or Vice-Chair of the working group, as appropriate.</p>  |

## **G. Investigation and advice on the role of the Private Sector Network and the Academic Network in the activities of the working groups and thematic networks.**

31. The Private Sector Network and the Academic Network are two major stakeholders that can play a crucial role in the activities of the working groups and thematic network to help the Regional Committee for Africa to achieve its objectives and to develop geospatial information in Africa.

32. The Private Sector Network consists of companies and organizations in the geospatial industry, while the Academic Network consists of universities, other research and education institutions, and academics involved in geospatial education and research.

33. Avenues that can be explored by the Private Sector Network include technical capacity-building; innovation; the mobilization of funds; and the development of mutually beneficial partnerships.

34. The Academic Network is expected to offer degree courses and skills development and contribute to increasing levels of expertise in geospatial science and technology. Universities and other academic institutions in Africa should provide formal degree training to develop the skills of young people and professionals in Africa, as well as tailored geospatial education and training programmes to increase the competency of working group and thematic network members.

35. Both networks should therefore substantively contribute to the activities of the working groups and thematic networks by sharing their experiences, presenting

business cases and offering technological solutions. The Regional Committee for Africa therefore needs to establish robust strategies for partnering with the two networks to ensure that such collaboration is effective.

## **H. Reporting mechanisms to advance the delivery of the programme of work**

36. A lack of effective communication and reporting is one of the major issues that have long hampered the implementation of the activities of the working groups and thematic networks. Effective reporting mechanisms are essential to allow working groups and thematic networks to monitor their progress and make informed decisions. Such mechanisms also ensure transparency within the working groups and thematic networks and in their interactions with stakeholders, which helps to foster trust, accountability and cooperation.

37. The strategies that should be implemented, according to the review, include:

(a) Standardized reporting templates to ensure consistency and facilitate the monitoring of progress across various working groups and thematic networks. The templates should include key performance indicators, milestones and targets that can be easily understood and monitored by all stakeholders.

(b) A regular reporting schedule to track and report on the progress made on the programme of work. Reporting should take place at least once a quarter. Regular updates will help to identify any bottlenecks or challenges and will foster a sense of accountability among working group and thematic network members.

(c) Clear channels of communication and reporting mechanisms between the working groups and thematic networks on the one hand and other stakeholders on the other.

(d) Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the performance of working groups and thematic networks, such as periodic reviews of progress reports, evaluations of the impact and outcomes of programmes, and surveys or feedback sessions with stakeholders.

## **I. Key findings**

38. The main findings of the review underline the poor performance of the working groups and thematic networks since their establishment. The substantial and tangible achievements of the Regional Committee for Africa have been achieved through the work of its secretariat. Over the past few years, ECA has invested extensive effort and resources in African countries in pursuit of the following objectives:

(a) To develop technical specifications for fundamental geospatial data sets for the continent;

(b) To build the capacity of national mapping institutions to develop and implement geospatial data infrastructure;

(c) To enhance the geospatial skills of professionals;

(d) To raise awareness of the importance of geospatial information among its members;

(e) To engage actively with a wide range of stakeholders;

(f) To cooperate with regional and international bodies.

39. The challenges faced are numerous and have hindered the operations of the working groups and thematic networks. The challenges include:

- (a) Insufficient financial resources, human resources and technical capacity;
- (b) Ineffective coordination and communication with stakeholders;
- (c) A lack of commitment, engagement, participation and interest among members of ECA, with many countries not participating and contributing to the activities of the Regional Committee;
- (d) A failure to sustain the implementation and follow-up of activities (recommendations);
- (e) Working group and thematic network activities that are not aligned with best practices identified in the sector;
- (f) Inadequate reporting and communication mechanisms.

40. The working groups are advised to take the following steps to align their practices with current trends:

- (a) Dissolve the Working Group on Fundamental Datasets and Standards;
- (b) Form a new working group on the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework to oversee the new overarching mechanism and help African countries to develop and implement the various pathways;
- (c) Establish a new working group on land administration and management, given the growing interest in the sector;
- (d) Merge the Working Group on Institutional Arrangements and Legal Frameworks and the Working Group on Capacity and Capability Development into a single working group covering the same activities of the two former groups, as well as policy and strategy.

41. On the basis of the changes described above and other recommended changes, the working groups would be structured as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

**Proposed restructured working groups of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa**

| <i>Areas of responsibility</i>                        | <i>Equivalent group under another regional committees</i>         | <i>Equivalent group directly under the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management</i> |
|---|---|---|
| Working group 1                                       |   |   |
| Geodesy   | None  | Subcommittee on Geodesy   |
| Working group 2                                       |   |   |
| Integration of statistical and geospatial information | Working Group on Data Integration (Regional Committee for Europe) | Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information                                   |
| Working group 3                                       |   |   |
| Integrated Geospatial Information Framework           | None  | None  |
| Working group 4                                       |   |   |
| Land administration and management                    | None  | Expert Group on Land Administration and Management  |

### III. Recommendations

42. If the recommendations that follow are properly implemented, the resulting working groups and thematic networks could be more effective and more agile, with their activities optimized for a greater impact. Based mainly on the findings of the literature review, the recommendations are as follows:

- (a) Form two new working groups: one on the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and one on land administration and management;
- (b) Abolish the Working Group on Fundamental Datasets and Standards;
- (c) Merge the Working Group on Institutional Arrangements and Legal Frameworks with the Working Group on Capacity and Capability Development to form a single working group that would also be responsible for policy and strategy;
- (d) Determine clear, measurable objectives for each working group or thematic network that align closely with the Regional Committee's overall vision to ensure purpose, focus and alignment;
- (e) Ensure that the composition of the working groups and thematic networks is geographically diverse and that members are chosen on the basis of how closely their expertise and interests align with the group's objectives and how committed they are to the objectives. This is critical to foster active contributions and promote engagement;
- (f) Appoint an effective leadership team to manage operations, facilitate activities and foster effective communication, coordination and collaboration;
- (g) Develop financing mechanisms to mobilize the necessary resources, tools and funding for the tasks of the working groups and thematic networks;
- (h) Develop measurable performance indicators with periodic monitoring and evaluation exercises to assess the effectiveness, impact and progress of each working group and thematic network;
- (i) Develop knowledge management systems (such as wikis and websites) to centralize and share best practices, resources and knowledge among working groups and thematic networks;
- (j) Forge partnerships with relevant regional and international bodies, private sector entities, academic institutions and civil society.

### IV. Conclusion

43. The present report underlines the importance of restructuring the working groups and thematic networks of the Regional Committee for Africa to make them more effective. The review, assessment and restructuring proposal of the Regional Committee's working groups and thematic networks provide valuable insights into their current lack of effectiveness, but also their irrefutable relevance as pillars of the Regional Committee of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework.

44. According to the study, the working groups and thematic networks have made only modest achievements and are being hampered by numerous challenges that are limiting their effectiveness and long-term sustainability. The challenges include their limited funding, human resources and technical capabilities. If such problems persist, they will threaten the long-term sustainability of the working groups and thematic networks.

45. The recommendations made to address the challenges identified are to strengthen member engagement, define smart and attainable goals, develop a viable funding mechanism, improve coordination and track performance and progress. These

recommendations will provide a clear road map for achieving an optimal number of working groups and thematic networks and improving their operations.

46. By implementing the recommendations, the Regional Committee for Africa will be able to fulfil its mandate to build a robust and sustainable framework that harnesses the power of geospatial information for sustainable development in Africa.

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