

United Nations Economic and Social Council
Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management Third session
Cambridge, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
24-26 July 2013

Agenda Item 10:
Critical issues relating to the integration of land and marine geospatial information

The Federation again welcomes the mandate of this Committee to enhance global collaboration and support the use of geospatial information to promote sustainable development and address challenges faced by humanity today such as climate change, rapid urbanization and under nourishment.

At this third session, the Federation particularly welcomes the discussion on the statement of principles, global geodetic reference frame and the integration of land and marine geospatial information. The Federation urges members to formulate, implement and deliver policies that will further expand collaboration, access to and use of geospatial information.

It has been observed that the seas and the oceans offer new opportunities and knowledge of this environment is crucial to create new opportunities. Back in 2006, FIG had also observed that three billion people (half of the world's population then) lives within 200 kilometres of the shoreline and estimated that by 2025, this figure may double. The need to effectively manage the coastal zone as well as the need for integration of data between the land, coast and marine environment requires system that incorporates them all. Many countries have a land administration system and some kind of marine management system, but these generally operate as separate entities.

We observed few integrated land and marine geospatial information capture, collation and access initiatives and policies, and the need for closer collaboration between land and marine geospatial information data creators remains. Whilst technical challenges are being addressed and could be resolved progressively and with time, there remains the people and the policy issues that will need to be address. The non-technical can be policy, legal and organizational. And beyond national boundaries, the policy and politics to collaborate with one another. In our estimation, both policy-willingness and people-readiness is needed to consider, develop and build interoperable standards, frameworks and infrastructures; to ensure that institutions as well as jurisdictions collaborate.

Whilst we observe that advances in number, types and capacities of platforms and sensors together with varied and innovative practices provide a spectrum of possibilities and opportunities, the need for interoperability and collaboration remains. This is necessary to harness the full potential and opportunities afforded by integrating land and marine geospatial information.

Whilst international organization, though only within its own capacities, are working collaboratively, in addressing technical challenges, as an example, the utilization of reference ellipsoid as the common vertical datum, we urge the Committee of Experts and their respective governments to avail resources to address key technical challenges within its jurisdiction, consider a working party of experts from within this Committee to identify, share and promote, good national policies, standards, infrastructures and practices that promotes the desired culture of interoperability and collaboration, to begin realizing the benefits and returns in the integration land and marine geospatial information for all members.

CheeHai TEO
President, International Federation of Surveyors
25th July 2015