

## The Global Geospatial Initiative comes to Africa

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Addis Ababa, 05 August 2011 (ECA) - Given the scale of cross-border global development challenges, ranging from humanitarian, energy, climate, environmental and food security, geospatial technology is enabling critical location-based information (geospatial information) for better decision support by policy-makers. Consequently, geospatial information offers integrated information, often through maps across various sectors which can be presented to decision-makers for strategic decision-making.

In addition, harnessing a geospatial industry has tremendous economic potential for African countries. For instance, in the US and Europe, use of geospatial information such as satellite imagery for decision-making has stimulated employment and business opportunities in the private sector.

Considering these facts, the United Nations Secretariat had launched the Global Geospatial Information Management (GGIM) initiative with aims at setting up a formal mechanism under the UN auspices to discuss and coordinate GGIM activities and by involving Member States as the key players.

This mechanism will help Member States to develop strategies for effective management of geospatial information, share common standards and practices, to promote international cooperation, as well as to build capacities in developing countries in the field.

Following this initiative, the secretariat also recently formed intergovernmental body, the UN committee on Global Geospatial Information Management, which will be responsible for the coordination and to bring government experts from all member states to consult on the rapidly changing field of geospatial information.

A resolution was passed by African member States during the last CODIST meeting held in May 2011, welcoming the GGIM initiative

Based on its leadership in promoting geospatial information in Africa, ECA is holding the Africa preparatory meeting (the GGIM Precom Africa) to establish a clear plan of action towards an active participation of African countries in the GGIM initiative.

The meeting is taking place from 8 – 10 August at the UNCC in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It will be opened by United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ECA, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh and addressed by leading experts in the field from around the world.

This three day meeting is expected to discuss the challenges in Geospatial Policy formulation and programme management in Africa; the main dimensions of geospatial information governance; coordinate the contribution of the Africa region to the global GGIM initiative; and map out strategies and propose action plans.

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