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**Economic Commission for Africa  
Committee of Experts of the Conference of African  
Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development**

Forty-fourth meeting  
Tangier, Morocco (hybrid), 28–30 March 2026

Item 6 of the provisional agenda\*

**Statutory issues**

**Report of the Regional Committee of United Nations  
Global Geospatial Information Management for  
Africa on its eleventh meeting**

**Note by the secretariat**

The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa has the honour to transmit to the members of the Commission the report of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa on its eleventh meeting.

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\* E/ECA/COE/44/1.



# Report of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa on its eleventh meeting

## Introduction

1. The United Nations Secretariat launched the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management, the purpose of which is to create a formal mechanism to discuss and coordinate the geospatial information activities of members of ECA. Regional committees were established, including the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa, which was formally recognized and co-opted by the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management at its fifth session, held in August 2015 in New York. The eleventh meeting of the Regional Committee was held in Accra from 17 to 21 November 2025, concurrently with the 2025 conference on geographic information systems for Africa (AfricaGIS).
2. Rooted in a commitment to coordinate geospatial development and contribute meaningfully to worldwide efforts, the Regional Committee has, over the past decade, developed comprehensive frameworks, policies, resources and innovative systems. Its efforts are making geospatial information technology more accessible and an indispensable resource for decision makers, policy architects and communities across the continent.
3. Building on the milestones achieved at previous meetings, the Regional Committee has focused on strengthening consensus among African countries, reviewing structures and operations and navigating the funding mechanisms needed for sustained progress.
4. The aim of the eleventh meeting was for the Regional Committee to review past activities and recommendations and to ignite a shared vision for geospatial information management in Africa. Together, participants exchanged knowledge, inspired innovation and elevated best practices that harness the unique potential of Africa.
5. Participants examined a number of issues, including:
  - (a) Implementing the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework in Africa;
  - (b) Strengthening linkages with other regional subcommittees and global geospatial initiatives to amplify the voice of Africa and to share the continent's experiences on the world stage;
  - (c) Advocating a stronger embedding of geospatial data in national development frameworks and plans;
  - (d) Promoting the ethical use of emerging data frontiers, such as hyperlocal data streams and real-time spatial analytics, while harnessing artificial intelligence and advanced cartographic techniques.

## I. Opening of the meeting [agenda item 1]

### A. Attendance

6. More than 80 participants, including members of the Regional Committee, representatives of national geospatial information authorities, experts from various sectors and diverse groups of subregional and regional organizations, attended the meeting.

7. Specifically, it was attended by participants from the following countries: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia and Zambia.

8. Resource persons and observers from many non-African countries were also present, as were representatives of the private sector and the following organizations: African Union Commission, African Regional Institute for Geospatial Science and Technology, Algerian Space Agency, German Agency for International Cooperation, International Federation of Surveyors, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Lands Commission of Ghana, Namibia Statistics Agency, National Institute of Statistics of Cameroon, National Space Research and Development Agency of Nigeria, Pasco Corporation and Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development.

9. Representatives of the following United Nations entities also attended: Secretariat of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Europe and United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre.

## **B. Opening statements**

10. The eleventh meeting of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa began with opening remarks from high-level officials.

11. The Chief of the Geospatial Information Services Section of ECA, Andre Nonguierma, welcomed participants to the eleventh session of the Regional Committee and shared information about the proceedings. The proposed organization of work for the eleventh meeting reflected the dual role of meetings of the Regional Committee as both a parliamentary process and a forum for intellectual exchange and the cross-fertilization of ideas among participants.

12. The outgoing Chair of the Executive Board of the Regional Committee, Clinton Heimann, emphasized the collective commitment to linking national geospatial programmes with wider development agendas and noted the need to move away from fragmented systems towards coherent national arrangements. He acknowledged that political endorsement, effective legislation and robust institutions for governance were crucial for successful implementation.

13. The representative of the secretariat of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management, Guillaume Le Sourd, expressed appreciation to Ghana for its hospitality and commended the steadfast dedication of ECA. He noted that, despite the challenges of ongoing United Nations reforms and budgetary constraints, the efforts of ECA consistently united and empowered the geospatial community across Africa and inspired its progress. He acknowledged the present dynamism and resolve among African members of ECA to elevate geospatial information management as a strategic development asset.

14. The President of the African Space Council at the African Space Agency, Tidiane Ouattara, delivered a goodwill message in which he underscored the strong alignment between the Agency's mandate and the objectives of United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa. He explained that the Agency's four main segments – Earth observation, navigation and positioning, communication, and astronomy – formed the foundation of geospatial intelligence. He emphasized the commitment of the Agency to working closely with the Regional Committee and ECA to embed

geospatial priorities within the broader space agenda of the African Union.

15. The Director of the African Centre for Statistics, Samuel Annim, opened the session by acknowledging the pivotal moment faced by the international development community, citing such recent challenges as the defunding of the Demographic and Health Survey of the United States Agency for International Development. He emphasized that addressing fragmentation in the geospatial sector and, more broadly, in data management required ambitious partnerships, coordinated efforts and integrated approaches. He reassured participants that ECA was committed to supporting geospatial initiatives and affirmed that geospatial information remained integral to the continent's data strategy, regardless of any structural changes that might be made.

## **II. Organizational matters [agenda item 2]**

### **A. Election of the Executive Board**

16. The Regional Committee unanimously elected the following countries as members of the Executive Board of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa for the period 2025–2026.

Chair:	Morocco
First Vice-Chair:	Burkina Faso
Second Vice-Chair:	Mozambique
First Rapporteur:	Burundi
Second Rapporteur:	Congo
Ex officio member:	Ethiopia

17. It was further agreed that ECA would continue to provide secretariat services for the Board.

### **B. Adoption of the agenda and the programme of work**

18. Participants reviewed the agenda, the programme of work and the rules of procedure. The provisional agenda for the eleventh meeting of the Committee, as outlined in document E/ECA/GGIM-A/11/1/Rev.1, was adopted without changes, as follows:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
  - (a) Election of the Executive Board;
  - (b) Adoption of the agenda and the programme of work;
  - (c) Rules of procedure.
3. Presentation of reports.
4. Policy issues.
5. Technical issues.
6. New trends.
7. Adoption of the report on the tenth meeting.
8. Proposed dates for the eleventh meeting.

9. Other matters.

10. Closing of the meeting.

19. The draft programme of work, as set out in document E/ECA/GGIM-A/10/2, built upon the provisional agenda and was also adopted without changes.

### C. Rules of procedure

20. The Regional Committee supported the proposal to amend certain articles in the Statutes of United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management in Africa (E/ECA/GGIM-A/1/4). Discussions were held on amendments to article 10, paragraphs 1 and 3 related to the members of ECA elected to the Committee of Experts Bureau to be granted ex officio membership.

21. The Regional Committee accepted an amendment to para. 3 that read as follows:

Any member State of UN-GGIM that is elected to serve on the global UN-GGIM Bureau shall, for the duration of its term at the global level, be a member ex officio of the Executive Board of UN-GGIM: Africa.

The ex officio membership described in this paragraph is in addition to the officers listed in paragraph 1 and does not affect their election or tenure.

### D. Decisions

22. The Regional Committee agreed to implement a new structure, with four working groups, to enhance the effectiveness of its operations. The composition of the working groups is shown below

<i>Working group</i>	<i>Voting members</i>	<i>Observers</i>
Integrated Geospatial Information Framework	Burundi Burkina Faso Cameroon Morocco South Africa	Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Togo, African Regional Institute for Geospatial Science and Technology, Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources, Economic Commission for Africa
Integration of geospatial and statistical information	Algeria Cameroon Comoros Mozambique Nigeria	Burkina Faso, Namibia, Niger, South Africa, Togo, African Regional Institute for Geospatial Science and Technology, Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources, Economic Commission for Africa
African Geodetic Reference Frame	Cameroon Côte d'Ivoire Madagascar Tunisia South Africa	Burkina Faso, Ghana, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, South Africa, Togo, Uganda, African Regional Institute for Geospatial Science and Technology, Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources, Trimble, Economic Commission for Africa

Land Administration and Management	Congo	Burkina Faso, Niger, South Africa, Togo, African Regional Institute for Geospatial Science and Technology, Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources, Esri, Economic Commission for Africa
	Eswatini	
	Ghana	
	Morocco	
	Uganda	

23. Two regional centres of excellence, namely, the African Regional Institute for Geospatial Information Science and Technology and the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development, shall continue to provide technical and secretarial support for the operations of each working group.

24. Crucial operational issues and challenges encountered by the Regional Committee were addressed, encompassing leadership and governance hurdles, framework and infrastructure obstacles, and the need for members of ECA to assume their funding responsibilities. The criticality of establishing a comprehensive geospatial governance mechanism in Africa was reaffirmed.

### III. Presentation of reports [agenda item 3]

#### A. Activities of the working groups

25. In the convenor of the Working Group on the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework reported that the first meeting had been held on 4 November 2025 to facilitate the implementation and operationalization of the framework across Africa. At the meeting, the Working Group had discussed its terms of reference (objectives, activities and working methods) conducted a baseline assessment of the implementation status of the framework in Africa, and developed a programme of work for regional coordination.

26. The convenor of the Working Group on Integration of Geospatial and Statistical Information reported that the Working Group had held its inaugural meeting in October 2025 to agree on its objectives, review the integration of statistical and geospatial information in each country, and discuss shared challenges. The Working Group had agreed to develop a digital communication platform and to hold monthly meetings online, with an annual in-person meeting planned to be held alongside the main meeting of the Regional Committee to synergize efforts and maximize resource use.

27. The convenor of the Working Group on the African Geodetic Reference Frame reported that the aim of the Working Group was to advance efforts to strengthen the continent's geodetic infrastructure. Since September 2025, the Working Group had held three meetings to set the terms of reference, elect leaders and discuss cooperation. Most notably, a memorandum of understanding had been signed with a technology company in the United States of America for technical support.

28. The convenor of the Working Group on Land Administration and Management reported that the Working Group was entrusted with appraising solutions for sustainable land management in Africa. The Working Group planned to convene its first meeting online in the coming weeks and was inviting broad participation to strengthen representation from all subregions in Africa.

#### B. Other reports

29. The Regional Committee introduced a report in which it underscored the need for greater recognition and participation of the private sector in geospatial

governance in Africa. It was suggested that a formal academic network be established, since academic networks are essential for implementing frameworks, given that universities and research institutions can translate technical standards into practical curricula and use cases tailored to each country's needs.

30. Hussein Farah, an associate professor at the Technical University of Kenya, gave a presentation on the Global Geodetic Observing System, which relies on worldwide observation networks that use such techniques as very long baseline interferometry, satellite laser ranging and astronomy to accurately monitor the Earth's shape, gravity and dynamic changes. He noted that Africa currently made only a limited contribution to geodetic observations, with only one major site, situated in South Africa, supporting all observation types. The Global Geodetic Observatory System had been developed so that new locations could be identified and proposed for additional infrastructure to improve the contribution that Africa made to global geodetic efforts.

31. Lastly, the secretariat of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management gave a concise review of its global structure, noting that it reported to the Economic and Social Council. The secretariat also presented the work programme, priorities and achievements of the Committee of Experts and the latest decisions of the Committee, including the concerns of members of ECA regarding staff shortages at the secretariat and the associated challenges for the good standing of the Committee.

## **IV. Policy issues [agenda item 4]**

### **A. Presentations**

32. The Chair of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for the Arab States, Mustapha Kahhak, noted that the Regional Committee had strengthened regional cooperation in geospatial information management through structured governance. It had focused on harmonizing geodetic frameworks with global standards, advancing geospatial governance using the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and adopting best practices. Collaboration between the Regional Committee and its counterpart for Asia and the Pacific through joint workplans reflected a proactive approach to interregional and cross-domain geospatial governance.

33. A representative of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Europe reported that, by diversifying its Executive Committee, with new members joining from Cyprus and Finland, it had extended its leadership beyond its traditional base to make it more balanced and more representative of the entire region. The new structure assigned clear responsibilities to each member while upholding four guiding principles: support from the Chair, visibility and accountability, strategic alignment with global priorities and flexible cooperation.

### **B. Discussion**

34. Participants reached a number of conclusions on governance and operational effectiveness:

(a) Funding from members of ECA was urgent and the executive working groups could be improved by incorporating the private sector and academic networks;

(b) The statutes could be amended to include an ex officio member on the Executive Board. Specifically, any member of ECA elected to serve on the

Bureau of the global Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management shall, for the duration of their term at the global level, be an ex officio member of the Executive Board of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa;

(c) Given the need to foster strategic partnerships and expand the engagement of observers, the unwavering participation of the International Federation of Surveyors across all sessions of the eleventh meeting was appreciated and its contributions to advancing geospatial excellence were invaluable;

(d) The low rate of implementation of past recommendations and resolutions adopted by the Regional Committee was concerning. Given that there was no structured mechanism to systematically track, review and report on the progress of continental strategies, including the African Action Plan on Global Geospatial Information Management, it was urgent to establish a robust monitoring and evaluation function to enhance the Committee's accountability, ensure the strategic relevance of its work and improve its overall effectiveness;

(e) The translation of such strategic frameworks as the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework into tangible national and regional applications had been limited by the lack of structured, sector-specific expert platforms. Such priority domains as statistics, marine management and border governance required dedicated technical coordination to address complex geospatial challenges and to harmonize practices across members of ECA.

## **C. Decisions**

35. Given the importance of establishing networks and thematic groups, two standing committees were appointed to deliberate and provide guidance to the Regional Committee on the steps needed to create a private sector network and an academic network.

36. The Regional Committee resolved to forge strategic partnerships with the parties concerned to deliver tailored training programmes that would empower a new generation of geospatial leaders in Africa.

37. A small advisory group of senior representatives was established to reflect and provide guidance on the practical steps to be taken to establish an academic network within the Regional Committee.

## **D. Recommendations**

38. In the light of the discussion, the Regional Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Endeavour to establish new thematic networks in such a way that representation is balanced;

(ii) Take steps to ensure improved funding for the new networks, to surmount the current limitations;

(iii) Report on their progress and achievements at each subsequent meeting of the Regional Committee, covering their implementation of resolutions adopted at previous meetings by the geospatial community of Africa and the steps taken by members of ECA in response to previous recommendations;

(b) Interested parties should continue to raise awareness of the importance of geospatial information for development among African

policymakers, and to advocate the establishment of a statutory committee on geospatial information management in Africa under the auspices of relevant bodies at the continental or global level or both;

(c) The Executive Board should:

(i) Formally integrate the International Federation of Surveyors as one of its main observer partners in future deliberations, thereby fostering enhanced global collaboration and knowledge exchange that amplifies the voice of Africa in international geospatial forums;

(ii) Set up a repository of geospatial value studies in the region to assist members of ECA in their efforts to convince political leaders of the importance of implementing geospatial policies and projects to improve government funding for geospatial activities;

(iii) Propose for consideration the establishment of a dedicated task team on monitoring and evaluation composed of five members – three seasoned experts (who should be former chairs or vice-chairs of the Executive Board), and two respected elders – which will undertake a comprehensive review by compiling all reports from past meetings, extracting the main elements from the African Action Plan and related strategic documents and systematically itemizing all pertinent resolutions, decisions and recommendations, and which will include assessing the implementation status of such measures and providing clear, actionable recommendations to guide future initiatives;

(iv) Propose to the Regional Committee, in order to enhance technical coordination and accelerate the implementation of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework across critical development sectors, the establishment of functional expert groups in United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa, formed in collaboration with relevant institutional counterparts and focused on important sectoral applications (initially in the statistics, marine environment and borders sectors), with the task of drafting sector-specific terms of reference and workplans, and subject to a review prior to their formal establishment at the twelfth meeting of the Regional Committee;

(v) Collaborate with ECA and the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre to foster geospatial leadership through a customized course on geospatial leadership in Africa, emphasizing soft skills for decision maker engagement and value assertion to build a cadre of African champions driving the implementation of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and to propel Africa towards self-sustained geospatial excellence;

(vi) Prepare a strategic road map to ensure that the Chair of the Executive Board addresses such high-level events as the ECA Conference of Ministers to secure high-level political endorsement and to enhance political leadership, advocacy and country-level commitment;

(d) The secretariat, prior to every meeting, should distribute a comprehensive reminder of past resolutions and recommendations and a standardized reporting form for documenting compliance and progress.

## **V. Technical issues [agenda item 5]**

### **A. Presentations**

39. Several initiatives and programmes were presented to illustrate how

African stakeholders, global technology partners and the United Nations system were aligning technical frameworks through practical tools and capacity-building efforts. Participants were informed that the resulting synergy was accelerating the deployment of geospatial information for development, strengthening institutional capacity and ensuring that accurate, timely geographical information contributed directly to more resilient and sustainable societies.

40. The Geospatial Information Management Officer of the secretariat of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management, Guillaume Le Sourd, noted that the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework provided a comprehensive, strategic guide for developing, integrating and strengthening geospatial information management in all countries. Under the leadership of the secretariat of United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management, the development of the Framework was delivered through high-level workshops and consultations across Africa to empower national initiatives.

41. The presenter of the GIS for Good initiative Salim Sawaya, explained how non-profit and global organizations could use advanced geographic information systems to maximize their social impact, improve humanitarian responses and support informed decision-making, with a focus on partnerships and scalable solutions.

42. The Technical Manager of Digital Earth Africa, Edward Boamah, explained that the global initiative addressed the continent's Earth observation needs by providing accessible satellite-based data products for diverse applications, ranging from water management and disaster response to environmental monitoring and the empowerment of African Governments and communities in the use of spatial intelligence for planning and decision-making.

43. The Vice-President of Strategy of a company providing advanced Earth observation solutions Wei Sun, explained that the company offered Africa-wide 50-centimetre satellite imagery, delivering high-resolution Earth observation data to all African countries. Such imagery supported mapping, urban planning, agriculture, disaster monitoring and national security.

44. A representative of the Open Geospatial Consortium said that the Consortium offered an inclusive forum for governments, universities and private sector experts to co-develop consensus-based, open geospatial standards. Such standards – freely available without intellectual property restrictions – were foundational for building interoperable geospatial systems regionally and globally.

45. In a presentation on a partnership between the Government of Japan and a Japanese geospatial information services company, a speaker representing the Government explained that the company was building robust partnerships with African countries to advance geospatial data ecosystems. The technical cooperation had ranged from topographic mapping and satellite imaging to the modernization of remote sensing centres and the deployment of advanced positioning reference networks.

46. The Executive Director of the African Regional Institute for Geospatial Information Science and Technology, Lazarus Ojigi, noted that such capacity development institutions as the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development and the African Regional Institute for Geospatial Information Science and Technology were expanding the capacity of Africa for geospatial innovation through targeted training, operational support and research partnerships. Their mandates included not only academic instruction, but also technical workshops, mentoring on emerging technologies (artificial intelligence, drones, the Internet of things), and supporting institutional digital transformation.

47. The Director of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Maryam Rabiee, presented the organization's SDGs Today initiative, which was providing structured training in geospatial artificial intelligence, in which artificial intelligence was integrated with spatial analytics to unlock new potential for African development. The training addressed the most urgent challenges that Africa faced by demonstrating real-world applications and fostering practical skills among professionals, students and policymakers.

48. A representative of Esri highlighted how census operations in Africa were being transformed by geographic information systems, which were enabling countries to create dynamic digital enumeration maps, validate addresses via satellite or survey, and manage complex census logistics efficiently and transparently.

49. Looking to the future of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management, the Committee of Experts shared a vision of the future of geospatial information, and in particular the role and strategic orientations of Africa and its contribution to advancing the global geospatial agenda.

50. A representative of the Algerian Space Agency presented a comprehensive national approach to geospatial information for sustainable development in Africa in which it combined the development of mapping and spatial data systems, active engagement in precision agriculture and disaster monitoring and the integration of satellite assets with local technical expertise.

51. Ms. Rabiee explained that ECA and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network had hosted Geographic Information Systems Day, a global initiative to promote the use of geospatial innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals by convening global experts, showcasing successful applications and building networks for knowledge exchange. The role of Africa in advancing geospatial capacity through innovation, leadership and partnership was highlighted.

52. A statistician of the Geospatial Information Management Section, Ayenika Godheart, noted that, in line with global efforts, a workshop had been organized on the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework – a guide to help governments to implement effective geospatial systems to support sustainable social, economic and environmental development. The facilitators had highlighted the role of the framework in the monitoring of national development priorities, raised awareness about the framework, and engaged stakeholders on recommended implementation guidance. The highly participatory workshop had facilitated peer learning among members of ECA, enabling participants to view the framework as a strategic reference for national geospatial leadership.

53. Representatives of Burkina Faso, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa provided a brief update on the progress they had made with their country-led action plan on the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework.

## **B. Discussion**

54. Participants welcomed the ongoing cooperation between national statistical offices and geospatial and mapping agencies in advising on the implementation of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework.

55. Participants took note of the opportunity for strengthening collaboration between geospatial information and statistical communities during the upcoming 2030 rounds of population and housing censuses.

56. The Regional Committee commended Burkina Faso, Burundi,

Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Eswatini, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa for the progress they had made.

## C. Recommendations

57. In the light of the discussion, the Regional Committee recommended that:

(a) Members of ECA still developing their framework should accelerate the remaining steps, with continued technical support from the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre, so that the plans could be finalized for presentation at the next meeting, in 2026;

(b) African centres of excellence should provide technical and institutional support to members of ECA for the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and should develop appropriate curricula and training materials on the framework, in close collaboration with the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre;

(c) The United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre should urgently support the continent in:

(i) Organizing subregional capacity-building workshops in Africa on enhancing national geospatial information arrangements for French-speaking countries, in collaboration with partners that included the secretariat of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa, the SDG Data Alliance and others;

(ii) Providing technical and financial support to countries that have expressed the need for assistance to initiate the development of action plans for country-level integrated geospatial information frameworks;

(iii) Empowering funding strategies with the funding guide for geospatial information frameworks through workshops, thus equipping members of ECA with techniques to quantify geospatial benefits, such as return-on-investment models linking data to gross domestic product uplift, and to tap such alternative funding as public-private partnerships and green bonds, fuelling a geospatial leadership revolution in Africa;

(d) Members of ECA should:

(i) Strengthen collaboration with national marine and hydrographic institutions to support the effective implementation of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework for hydrology;

(ii) Leverage resources between the statistical and geospatial communities and ensure that efforts related to geospatial statistical integration are collaboratively implemented between the national geospatial agencies and statistical offices;

(e) The Regional Committee, recognizing the critical need for enhanced data interoperability, should facilitate the establishment of an ad hoc technical working group comprising representatives of Ghana, Namibia, South Africa and other interested countries to advance the integration of precise location coordinates within statistical analysis frameworks.

## VI. New trends [agenda item 6]

### A. Presentations

58. A participant presented the Map Africa initiative, a transformational

effort to create detailed, authoritative basemaps for every African country, thus strengthening geospatial mapping across the continent. The speaker noted that Map Africa addressed the structural gap that existed for the many African countries that lacked comprehensive, up-to-date mapping data, which hindered their development planning and decision-making. The initiative allowed collaboration with national mapping agencies and the provision of technology support at subsidized costs, thus empowering African countries to build their endogenous mapping capacity.

59. A technical adviser for the African Union Border Programme, Haifa Aboubaker, noted that, since only a third of the continent's borders were clearly delimited and demarcated, potential sources of conflict existed when disputes arose over resources or territorial boundaries. Through the Border Programme, the African Union prioritized capacity-building through institutional reforms, technical training of border personnel and the deployment of modern technologies, including geospatial systems, to strengthen border management institutions and enable pragmatic cross-border cooperation.

## **B. Discussion**

60. Participants noted with appreciation the vital role of ECA and the African Union Commission as focal points and as leaders for geospatial information activities in Africa. They recognized the need for an overarching statutory committee on geospatial information management, which would be entrusted with tasks that included organizing a conference of ministers and a summit of Heads of State and identifying African geospatial champions.

## **C. Recommendations**

61. In the light of the discussion, the Regional Committee recommended that:

(a) Members of ECA should:

(i) Attend the sixteenth session of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, in August 2026 in New York, and the third United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress, in November 2026 in Riyadh;

(ii) Voice their concern that the secretariat of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management has insufficient resources to sustain the operations and activities it carries out to support the programme of work of the Committee of Experts;

(iii) Endeavour to develop and implement their national action plan on the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework as a foundational element for geospatial information management to achieve their priorities and as a strategic enabler for sustainable development in their respective countries;

(b) United Nations global centres of excellence should support, amplify and sustain capacity-building for members of ECA by offering training opportunities tailored to each country's operational needs;

(c) The Executive Board should appoint an advisory group to guide the integration of expertise from the private sector and to formalize the creation of an African academic network.

## **VII. Special topics [agenda item 7]**

### **A. Presentations**

62. Mr. Heimann presented the contributions that the Regional Committee had made to a number of initiatives, events and activities at the global and regional levels to leverage them as platforms for engagement with a broad spectrum of decision makers, users and service providers across the continent. The initiatives included the following:

(a) The data hubs for the Sustainable Development Goals, facilitated through the SDG Data Alliance, which had enabled several countries to share and publish critical national geospatial data sets that were essential for monitoring progress towards the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(b) The global geodetic reference frame, which the Regional Committee had supported through its engagement with the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence and through its participation in such regional geodetic initiatives as the regional workshop aimed at strengthening African geodetic infrastructure.

### **B. Discussion**

63. Participants noted that the African Union had recently endorsed the campaign for the use of the Equal Earth projection in maps in a global effort to foster a more balanced perception of the world, promote a more accurate representation of the Earth, and advance the visibility and equity of Africa in the global arena. They unanimously acknowledged that this was an important change to rectify the distortions in the old Mercator map, which made Africa look much smaller than it actually was. It was noted that the use of the Equal Earth map projection would provide a more accurate and equitable visualization of the continent, showing its true size.

### **C. Recommendations**

64. In the light of the discussion, the Regional Committee recommended that:

(a) The Executive Board should request, through the International Advisory Committee of the United Nations Global Geospatial World Congress, that invitations be extended for ministers in member countries of ECA to participate in the forthcoming Third United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress in Riyadh, and to organize a dedicated ministerial segment to highlight and promote the role of geospatial information in advancing national development priorities and the global development agenda;

(b) The Working Group on the African Geodetic Reference Frame should expedite the harmonization of national geodetic reference systems across the continent to standardize the geodetic framework and forestall border disputes;

(c) The Executive Board should ensure the finalization and continental launch of an African geospatial development index as a benchmarking tool would provide a transparent ranking and profiling of members of ECA, offering a measurable framework to monitor progress and inform strategic investment;

(d) The Executive Board should champion the adoption of the marine spatial data infrastructure maturity road map of the Open Geospatial

Consortium to create a unified pathway for members of ECA to develop interoperable marine spatial data infrastructure and, by leveraging this practical, quick-start tool, to quantify maturity levels, to secure targeted financing and transform marine data into actionable intelligence for development agendas;

(e) United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa should support the initiative of changing the paradigm of map representation to use a projection that adequately reflects the shape and size of the African continent.

## **VIII. Adoption of the report on the eleventh meeting**

[agenda item 8]

65. The participants adopted the draft conclusions and recommendations that had been circulated by the secretariat of the Regional Committee. Members of the Regional Committee agreed that, once the draft version of the report on the meeting had been completed, it would be circulated by the secretariat for comment and further input before being finalized by the secretariat.

## **IX. Proposed dates for the twelfth meeting [agenda item 8]**

66. The Regional Committee requested that the Executive Board make the necessary arrangements for the convening of the twelfth meeting in conjunction with other major geospatial-related events in 2026 where feasible.

## **X. Other matters [agenda item 9]**

67. No other matters were raised.

## **XI. Closing of the meeting [agenda item 10]**

68. The incoming Chair, Kamal Outghouliast, in his closing remarks, highlighted the value of the meeting, noting that it had provided opportunities for the Regional Committee to:

(a) Recognize the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework as the next frontier for global, regional and national geospatial information management;

(b) Engage with industry partners and stakeholders, which had underscored, through their insights on geospatial resources and on data capture, access and dissemination, that collaboration was essential;

(c) Review the progress that members had made in developing and implementing national action plans, while revisiting guiding principles and identifying future steps.

69. He reminded member States that it was critical to integrate geospatial information seamlessly with statistics and sectoral data for informed decision-making.

70. He underscored that full engagement and unwavering commitment were essential for countries to leverage geospatial information and work towards the Sustainable Development Goals. He assured participants of the Executive Board's dedication to its objectives for 2026.

71. The meeting was closed by the Chair at 3 p.m.