



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
16 December 2022

Original: English

---

## Statistical Commission

### Fifty-fourth session

28 February–3 March 2023

Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda\*

### Items for decision: integration of statistical and geospatial information

## Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information

### Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2022/324 and past practices, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information. In its report, the Expert Group summarizes the activities it has undertaken since the fifty-third session of the Statistical Commission, in accordance with Commission decision 53/127. The Expert Group has focused on the continued promotion, implementation and operationalization of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework; it has examined its future strategic direction as determined by the mandates provided to it by the Statistical Commission and the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management; and it has commenced the implementation of its workplan for the period 2022–2024. The Expert Group provides the Commission with information on its progress in developing guidance for Member States to enable them to maximize the outputs of the 2020 round of population and housing censuses with a view to meeting the integrated data needs of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; shares the outcomes of its seventh meeting, held in Santiago, including how it will refocus its direction towards geospatially integrated statistics to meet new demands, such as climate change-, disaster- and health-related statistics (e.g. on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)), by expanding on the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework for the statistical domain; and discusses how it can support the implementation of Council resolution 2022/3, in particular how the Commission can respond to the growing demands for the integration of statistical and geospatial information. The Commission is invited to take note of the report of the Expert Group, including its revised terms of reference, its updated workplan for the period 2022–2024 and its progress in the integration of statistical and geospatial information.

---

\* E/CN.3/2023/1.



# Report of the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information

## I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to Statistical Commission decision 44/101, the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information comprises members of the professional statistical and geospatial communities of Member States and relevant international organizations. The overall objectives and functions of the Expert Group are to pursue the implementation of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework, as endorsed by the Commission in its decision 51/123 (see [E/2020/24](#)), and to support regional and global agendas, such as the 2020 round of population and housing censuses and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Since its establishment in 2013, the Expert Group has reported to both the Commission and the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management at each of their respective annual sessions.

2. As it approaches the milestone of the conclusion of its first decade of work, the Expert Group has taken stock of the current global landscape and worked on determining the scope of its future work. Originally, at the Expert Group's inception, the overarching demand for integrating statistical and geospatial information was focused on censuses, and later incorporated the 2030 Agenda upon its adoption in 2015. Today, most countries have either completed their iteration of the 2020 round of population and housing censuses or are in the final stages of preparation. As countries look beyond this decadal event, the Expert Group must do so, too.

3. As the midterm review of the 2030 Agenda nears, the world is at a critical juncture. According to the *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022*, the 2030 Agenda is in grave jeopardy owing to multiple, cascading and intersecting crises. COVID-19, climate change and conflict predominate, and each, together with the complex interactions among them, has an impact on all the Goals, creating spin-off crises in food and nutrition, health, education, the environment, and peace and security. To put the world on track to sustainability will require concerted action on a global scale. The vital need to put the world on track has highlighted the fragility and limitations of existing national statistical systems and the increasing demands to use geospatial information, and its enabling technologies, to fill the gaps. As the mechanism for linking data about people and businesses to a place or geographical location, the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework is an enabling framework that can help countries to transform their national data ecosystems to foster an improved understanding of social, economic and environmental issues to a much greater extent than when statistical or geospatial information is viewed in isolation.

4. In the present report, the Expert Group summarizes the activities it has undertaken since the fifty-third session of the Statistical Commission and the decisions emanating from the twelfth session of the Committee of Experts, convened from 3 to 5 August 2022; provides information on its progress in developing guidance for Member States to enable them to maximize the outputs of the 2020 round of population and housing censuses with a view to meeting the integrated data needs of the 2030 Agenda; shares the outcomes of its seventh meeting, in Santiago, convened on 1 and 2 December 2022, including how it will refocus its direction towards geospatially integrated statistics to meet new demands, and the appointment of new co-chairs; discusses refinements to its terms of reference and workplan for the period 2022–2024, both of which are provided to the Commission as background documents of its fifth-fourth session; and discusses how it can support the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution [2022/3](#).

5. The Commission is invited to take note of the present report, welcome the progress made by the Expert Group in the integration of statistical and geospatial information and agree to the future direction of the Expert Group.

## II. Twelfth session of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

6. In its decision 12/108 (see [E/2023/46](#)), the Committee of Experts welcomed the report of the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information (see [E/C.20/2022/12](#)) and the continued efforts to support the integration of statistical and geospatial information to realize national priorities and global development agendas. The Committee, *inter alia*, recognized that the enhanced demand for the integration of geospatial, statistical and other forms of data required strengthened participation and institutional coordination between geospatial and statistical agencies, and urged greater participation, in particular by developing countries, in the work of the Expert Group, to enable a deeper exchange of knowledge and lessons learned.

7. The Committee encouraged the Expert Group to undertake an examination of the broader needs and demands that it might face in the future, identifying needs and common gaps, disseminating good practices and finding opportunities to share insights to build and sustain a robust support framework, and to continue the development of guidance materials to assist Member States with their efforts in the implementation of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework, together with the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework – the overarching framework of the global geospatial information management community.

8. On the margins of its twelfth session, the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information and the working group on geospatial information of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators convened a side event to communicate the progress made in geostatistical integration. In promoting the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework and its Implementation Guide, the Expert Group highlighted the crucial role of partnership and collaboration among national statistical offices, national geospatial information agencies and other actors within the national data ecosystem as underlying principles for building transformative development information. Moreover, the working group on geospatial information introduced the SDGs geospatial road map, adopted by Statistical Commission decision 53/101 (see [E/2022/24](#)). The road map, divided into three phases,<sup>1</sup> recognizes geospatial information as official data for the Goals and provides key recommendations and guidance to enable the transformational potential of geospatial information to be harnessed, while mitigating potential complexities around its use.

## III. Seventh meeting of the Expert Group

9. The seventh meeting of the Expert Group was hosted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Santiago on 1 and 2 December 2022, on the margins of the ninth session of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas. The meeting was attended by 32 participants, including representatives of national statistical offices and national geospatial information agencies, from 15 Member

---

<sup>1</sup> Phase 1: prepare and plan; phase 2: design, development and testing; and phase 3: measuring, monitoring and reporting geospatially enabled Sustainable Development Goal indicators.

States (Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)), and the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat.

10. At its seventh meeting, the Expert Group reviewed and deliberated on its future direction, including identifying how to advance the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework; agreed on its next steps to assist Member States in strengthening statistical geospatial integration and coordination with a view to ensuring the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda; and established coordination mechanisms to enable Member States to build resilient, agile, relevant, responsive and robust statistical and data systems, adhering to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, that fully integrate geospatial information.

11. In addition, the Expert Group and the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas convened the regional workshop on integrating statistical and geospatial information for sustainable development, held on the theme “The Global Statistical Geospatial Framework and beyond”, as a component of the session of the Regional Committee. The regional workshop enabled the Expert Group and the Regional Committee to deliberate on how to promote and raise awareness of the Framework and its Implementation Guide and examined how the Framework could be practically operationalized by Member States to strengthen geostatistical integration.

#### **A. Business modalities of the Expert Group**

12. In its decision 12/108, the Committee of Experts expressed its thanks to Germany and Namibia for their leadership in co-chairing the Expert Group during the global COVID-19 pandemic and noted the expressions of interest from Brazil and Ireland to lead the Expert Group, which, at its seventh meeting, appointed Brazil and Ireland as its Co-Chairs by acclamation. In that regard, the Expert Group reiterated its thanks to both Germany and Namibia for their leadership since 2019, expressing particular appreciation for their leadership through the turbulent and demanding times of COVID-19. The Expert Group looks forward to continuing its work under the leadership of Brazil and Ireland.

13. In discussion, the Expert Group welcomed the return of in-person meetings as a means of recommitting to its workplan and delivering on its mandates. It underscored the importance of meeting in person because, although virtual meetings enabled progress to be made, they were no substitute for the dynamic and inclusive environment that in-person meetings provided. The Expert Group thanked ECLAC for hosting its seventh meeting and highlighted how the provision of simultaneous interpretation between English and Spanish had enabled countries to participate that had previously been unable to do so owing to the language barrier. In the coming year, the Expert Group committed itself to continuing to investigate how resources could be made available to support the participation of members from across linguistic divides. In this regard, the Expert Group invites the Statistical Commission to identify suitable resources to better facilitate the implementation of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework and its mandates, including through the translation of the Framework and associated materials.

14. Brazil offered to host the eighth meeting of the Expert Group in Rio de Janeiro. However, it was stressed that the Expert Group should convene its next meeting away from the Americas and Europe (which had hosted its sixth meeting) and look towards the regions of Africa, Asia and the Pacific or Western Asia as a means of enabling

participation in other regions and promoting the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework to address geostatistical integration worldwide.

## **B. Strategic direction of the Expert Group**

15. In discussing its future strategic direction, the Expert Group noted that many countries had implemented the 2020 round of censuses and agreed to refocus its future direction towards meeting the demands of countries for integrated geostatistical data. In that regard, the Expert Group took note of Economic and Social Council resolutions [2022/3](#) and [2022/24](#) and recognized that it was uniquely positioned as the bridge between the statistical and geospatial communities. The Expert Group emphasized that integration and collaboration could and should be strengthened to enable both communities to implement the two resolutions.

16. The discussion enabled the Expert Group to distil two views: (a) the only constant in current and future data environments is change; and (b) information is power, yet it is often centralized and seldom used to empower those at the margins of the data ecosystem. The Expert Group underscored the importance of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, with its nine strategic pathways, as a means of empowering increasingly interconnected and integrated data ecosystems at the national level. Stressing the importance of partnerships and of communication and engagement (as two of the Framework's strategic pathways), the Expert Group considered how best to communicate the Framework to the statistical domain, forming a task team under the leadership of Canada and Mexico to develop appropriate tools to that end. The United States, as one of the Co-Chairs of the High-level Group on the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, the functional group that steers the development and implementation of the Framework under the purview of the Committee of Experts, welcomed the Expert Group's decision.

17. In another key part of the discussion, it was agreed that the Expert Group must now look beyond the 2020 round of censuses to the integration of more emergent and real-time data sources. Noting that much of the data that would empower the measurement and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals would be drawn from the 2020 round of censuses, the Expert Group expressed concern that countries that were already lagging behind would lag further behind. While the Expert Group was hopeful that much of the data emanating from the 2020 round of census would help to meet the increasing demand for geospatially enabled statistical data, with the characteristics relevant to their national contexts and the ambition of the 2030 Agenda, it agreed that being hopeful was not a clear strategy that would enable countries to deliver and execute their ambition without the right data.

18. Several countries expressed confusion over the seemingly dichotomous state of data availability today. In a little over a decade, the roles of both national geospatial information agencies and national statistical offices had transformed dramatically. The crux of the transformation is that previously, national geospatial information agencies and national statistical offices were the almost-sole providers of data for a country. Today, the expanding availability of Earth observations, mobile phones and other novel data streams has dramatically changed the potential national data environment, with many institutions outside the national data ecosystem able to provide comparable and more timely data. As countries work to embrace this transformational shift, the Expert Group stresses the important role of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework in facilitating the production of geospatially enabled statistical data for data-driven and evidence-based decision-making.

19. In emergent areas of work, such as disaster-related statistics and climate change, the response, whether at the local, regional or global level, is based on integrating geospatial, statistical and other related information. Importantly, in addition to several subsidiary groups, a number of decisions of the Statistical Commission already recognize the need for geospatially integrated statistical data, and the Expert Group recognizes the opportunity to highlight the enabling role of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework for these groups. For example:

(a) **Decision 53/101 on the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.** The Commission adopted the SDGs geospatial road map for statistical and geospatial actors working within the global indicator framework. The road map grounds the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework as the framework for bridging the divide between the statistical and geospatial communities;

(b) **Decision 53/107 on population and housing censuses.** The Commission highlighted the importance of implementing the United Nations recommendation for the 2020 round of censuses regarding the need to georeference housing units during census operations, thus enabling a comprehensive merging of geospatial data and census statistics;

(c) **Decision 53/112 on health statistics.** The Commission expressed support for new areas of work in the World Health Organization, particularly on health and geographic information systems, which would assist Member States in developing and harnessing administrative data systems, as well as in integrating statistical and geospatial data;

(d) **Decision 53/119 on business and trade statistics.** The Commission took note of the manual on the maturity model for statistical business registers, encouraged the development of a toolkit and endorsed the launching of a regular global assessment on the status of implementation of statistical business registers in countries, encouraged close coordination with the Wiesbaden Group and other relevant groups, welcomed the proposed capacity-building activities for statistical business registers, and suggested developing guidelines for the integration of geospatial information into statistical business registers;

(e) **Decision 53/122 on agricultural and rural statistics.** The Commission encouraged the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to develop an integrated quality assurance framework for statistics, big data and geospatial data, in close collaboration with other United Nations agencies and in line with already established recommended international methods and standards;

(f) **Decision 53/124 on big data.** The Commission supported the proposed direction of future work of the Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics, in particular regarding mainstreaming big data and data science in the daily work of national statistical offices, taking into account the local circumstances, prioritizing case studies on strategic issues related to main policy agendas, creating a network of data science leaders of national statistical offices, and strengthening the collaboration with the geospatial community.

20. Notably, the previous report of the Expert Group highlighted decisions on economic statistics (decision 52/105) and regional statistical development (decision 52/110). With regard to other subsidiary groups of the Statistical Commission, the Expert Group wishes to reiterate its willingness to cooperate and “be the bridge” to harness the potential that geospatial information can bring to the statistical community. It agreed to invite representatives of those groups to participate in its work, establishing a programmatic coordination mechanism that urged the implementation and operationalization of the Global Statistical Geospatial

Framework. Simultaneously, the Expert Group is aware of the broader set of needs and opportunities that will arise from the enhanced demand for statistical-geospatial integration on the broader programmes of work of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management and the Commission and looks forward to meeting these future challenges.

21. Thus, the Expert Group's future direction will focus on enabling the implementation and application of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework to underpin the integrated data needs to address climate change, natural disasters, security issues, food production and other areas of the 2030 Agenda at the national and local levels. The Expert Group agreed that it would invite to participate in its work representatives of other functional groups of the Statistical Commission, as a means of coordinating programmatic work on geostatistical integration across the Commission and promoting the Framework in other areas.

### C. Taking stock and refining the Expert Group's workplan for the period 2022–2024

22. The Expert Group took the opportunity to review its workplan for the period 2022–2024, taking stock of current progress and noting that there was a need to prioritize the following items:

(a) **Task team on expanding the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework for the statistical domain.** Led by Canada and Mexico, the principal output will be a white paper that contextualizes the importance of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, drawing upon it and the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework, and their respective implementation guides, to communicate the value of geospatial information to senior decision makers within national statistical systems and the broader national data ecosystems;

(b) **Task team on capacity-building and assessment.** Led by Norway and Sweden, this task team will develop a capacity-assessment tool that helps countries to assess the maturity of geostatistical integration. At the meeting, the Expert Group noted the offers of resources from the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century to support the development of that work, and committed to liaising with the Partnership to identify the precise nature of the offer of support. The Expert Group underscored the importance of ensuring that it would not duplicate the efforts of other groups working in that domain and discussed several maturity models and other capacity-assessment tools;

(c) **Task team on the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework.** Led by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States, this Task Team aims to undertake and refine the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework, updating it with prevailing innovations and novel approaches, including the SDGs geospatial road map, outputs from the Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics and other significant advancements made since its adoption. Following the refinement of the Framework, this task team aims to continue, developing guidance on user-centric geographies (i.e. statistics disseminated through geographies developed on the basis of specific user needs rather than common geographies, irrespective of whether they are statistical or administrative geographies).

23. In its workplan for the period 2022–2024, the Expert Group identified the importance of leveraging enterprise architecture in the integration of statistical and geospatial information and discussed the value of developing further insights in that

regard. However, in the light of its available resources, the Expert Group agreed to prioritize the work items listed above (para. 22).

#### **D. Revising the Expert Group's terms of reference and refreshing its membership**

24. Through consultation before and after its meeting, the Expert Group has refined its terms of reference and workplan for the period 2022–2024 to reposition itself to meet the growing demands for integrating statistical and geospatial information. In the light of the enhanced demand for geostatistical integration and the prevailing mandates calling for geospatial information to be enhanced within the national data ecosystems, the Expert Group has decided to revise its terms of reference and refresh its membership.

25. In advance of the seventh meeting, Brazil and Ireland initiated a review process on the Expert Group's terms of reference, with the view to receiving written responses from members unable to participate in its upcoming seventh meeting. At the meeting, the Expert Group entrusted the Co-Chairs to refine the terms of reference in alignment with the outcomes and focus agreed. The revised terms of reference are provided as a background document to the present report, and the Statistical Commission is invited to take note of them.

26. In recognition of its new direction and scope, the Expert Group wishes to invite to participate in the development and communication of its work new members of the Statistical Commission. This will be essential to ensuring diversity of views and geographical participation as the Expert Group advances. Noting that many members are drawn from the geographical information system units of national statistical offices, the Expert Group wishes to emphasize that the integration of statistical and geospatial information is a holistic objective for national statistical offices. In this regard, the Expert Group welcomes members drawn from among decision makers responsible for thematic areas, such as the response to COVID-19, climate change, natural disasters, security issues, food production and other areas of the 2030 Agenda.

#### **E. Strengthening coordination and coherence**

27. Noting the many instances in which the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework has been translated so far (available in English, Chinese, French and Spanish), the Expert Group expressed its appreciation to Brazil for its efforts in translating the Framework into Portuguese. In that regard, the Expert Group welcomed offers from members to translate the Framework into the remaining official languages of the United Nations, Arabic and Russian, as well as other languages.

28. In preparation for its seventh meeting, the Expert Group requested its members that work within the United Nations regional commissions, regional intergovernmental organizations (such as Eurostat) or regional working groups on geostatistical integration (such as those under the auspices of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management regional committees), as regional focal points, to summarize the progress of their respective regions in the implementation of the Framework. These regional perspectives complemented the outputs of the global survey on readiness to implement the Framework, which considered Framework implementation at the national level. Although the consolidated responses to the global survey helped to take stock of regional progress, the unequal distribution in the responses to the survey in some regions highlighted the need to develop a new coordination mechanism to strengthen implementation at both the national and regional levels.



29. To take stock of regional progress in the implementation of the Framework, the Expert Group invited regional focal points to provide a two-page summary of regional progress in advance of the meeting. The Expert Group received responses from Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe. In addition, representatives of the Statistics Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia provided a recent document of the regional Statistical Committee at its fifteenth session in which regional geostatistical integration was summarized (E/ESCWA/C.1/2022/6).

30. Welcoming the many instances in which the Framework had been adopted regionally, the Expert Group expressed concern about the unequal global progress of the Framework's implementation but noted that each region had a developed architecture, namely in the form of regional working groups focused on the integration of statistical and geospatial information. In that regard, the Expert Group decided to strengthen coordination between itself and the regions, as well as among the regions, by requesting that the Member States that were leading these regional working groups participate in the Expert Group alongside other regionally appropriate focal points (such as representatives of each regional commission or regional intergovernmental organization). Once that participation has been established, the Expert Group intends to request regional focal points to detail the scope of their current capacity-building work with countries, including how they are working to implement and operationalize the Framework to further determine how the global level can support regional efforts, up to and including developing further technical guidance to implement the Framework.

31. Thus, anchored by the Framework, the Expert Group aims to continue its work to realize Statistical Commission decision 48/108, whereby the mandate of the Expert Group was strengthened, making it the overall coordination group for all activities in the area of the integration of statistical and geospatial information. Through the actions agreed upon at its seventh meeting, the Expert Group hopes to simultaneously strengthen regional and programmatic coordination and provide support and guidance to regional focal points and associated Member States, leading to the enhanced implementation of the Framework.

#### **IV. Ongoing working modalities of the Expert Group**

32. Between its sixth and seventh meetings, the Expert Group has been conducting virtual meetings on a quarterly basis (approximately). Alongside the regular virtual meetings, ad hoc meetings have been convened to support the work of the Expert Group, including meetings between the Co-Chairs and the Secretariat, with its task teams and work streams convening virtual meetings as appropriate.

33. The Expert Group welcomes the support of regional focal points and, in its drive for closer ties, welcomes the convening of the joint Expert Group/regional meetings in order to more closely align the work of the Expert Group with the practical needs of Member States. Acknowledging the diversity of the Member States, the Expert Group welcomes support from regional focal points with regard to translation and identification of the most effective communication modalities to ensure that information about the importance of the Framework and its role in enabling geostatistical integration is reaching a suitable audience.

#### **V. Conclusion and way forward**

34. In its decision 51/123, the Statistical Commission endorsed the Framework, as adopted by the Committee of Experts in its decision 9/106. Notably, the apex

intergovernmental entities of the statistical and geospatial communities have called for the implementation and operationalization of the Framework at the national and regional levels. With the adoption of Economic and Social Council resolutions [2022/3](#) and [2022/24](#), the urgent need for countries to develop their capacity to integrate statistical and geospatial information is finally being recognized.

35. The Expert Group advocates that the integration of statistical and geospatial information be considered crucial for meeting the demands of the changing data landscape. This does not and should not mean focusing efforts on expanding geographical information system units within national statistical offices. The expansion of such units is a good first step, especially in the context of conducting a census, but many Member States have existing national geospatial information agencies capable of providing support that can be leveraged. Still, the Expert Group urges that a holistic approach to the national integrated data environment be taken, the importance of which has been demonstrated by the evolving, complex demands of COVID-19. Such an approach requires leadership at all levels to help to break down silos, identify gaps, utilize existing resources accordingly and develop new partnerships and institutional arrangements as opportunities arise.

36. Global and national data management needs are understandably complex. The pace and granularity of the geospatially integrated statistical data that decision makers need are expanding exponentially, yet, few countries have integrated statistical and geospatial institutions, and separate institutions rarely have the resources to provide all the dimensions/disaggregations of data demanded by decision makers. This tension in the allocation of resources is heightened in developing countries, with most countries having non-existent or nascent institutional arrangements between statistical and geospatial institutions. As a result, an undue burden is placed on national statistical offices, often leading to duplication of work and diverting institutions from their core mission. As evidenced anecdotally within the results of the global survey on readiness to implement the Framework and detailed in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme ([E/CN.3/2022/8](#)), the implementation of such geocoding techniques requires significant additional investment, for example in developing detailed geographical frames (i.e. common geographies), as address registers are not readily available in many countries.

37. In this regard, the role of the national geospatial information agency cannot be underestimated. In its 2018 report to the Statistical Commission ([E/CN.3/2018/33](#)), the Expert Group stated that all statistical unit record data should be collected or associated with a location reference and that, ideally, it should allow for geospatial coordinates with x- and y-values to be produced for each record. This recommendation was informed by the data collection needs of each stage of the census process, from preparation and collection to analysis and dissemination. The recommendation also has specific relevance to the 2030 Agenda, given the need for geospatially enabled statistics to produce the Sustainable Development Goal indicators.

38. The Expert Group urges countries to examine their institutional arrangements to reduce or remove the barriers to data-sharing (and reduce costly duplication). In managing the integration of statistical and geospatial information in a more cooperative manner, national data ecosystems will optimize available resources, reducing potential duplication and enabling the development of more value, insights, analytics and ready-to-use geospatially integrated statistical data.

39. In effect, the transition from the 2020 to the 2030 rounds of population and housing censuses cannot follow a “business as usual” approach. The global and national demands for geospatially integrated data are too great, and the Expert Group

recognizes its unique role in bridging the divide between the statistical and geospatial communities, which will be the fulcrum of this transformation. The work on geostatistical integration is guided by the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework, bridging the divide between geospatial community (anchored by the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework) and the statistical community (anchored by the Generic Statistical Business Process Model). At the heart of this transformation are partnerships and collaboration, within and between national institutions, and with the private sector, especially as national statistical offices embrace data stewardship.

40. To achieve these goals and objectives, the Expert Group has revised its terms of reference and refined its workplan for the period 2022–2024 under the leadership of Brazil and Ireland. In the coming intersessional period, the Expert Group will continue to promote the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework, anchored by the decisions emanating from its seventh meeting and its prevailing mandates. Thus, the Expert Group welcomes Member States to identify expert representatives from their geospatial and statistical national organizations who can provide the commensurate leadership and expertise needed as the Expert Group implements its mandates and workplan.

41. Given the scale of the challenges at the global level and the growing data needs of Member States, the Expert Group expresses concern that, without a deeper commitment to the production of geospatially integrated statistical data, the necessary progress will not be achieved in terms of global development agendas or Member States' national development priorities. Through the efforts of the Expert Group, the Committee of Experts is continuing to work with the Statistical Commission to support the implementation of the Framework as a globally consistent mechanism for enabling the integration of statistical and geospatial information, and stands ready to support the Commission's broader aims and objectives, including the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution [2022/3](#).

## **VI. Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission:**

42. **The Commission is invited:**

(a) **To welcome the Expert Group's progress and support the continued implementation of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework in the context of the Expert Group's future strategic direction;**

(b) **To take note of the Expert Group's revised terms of reference and workplan for the period 2022–2024;**

(c) **To urge Member States to adopt and implement the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework, especially given the added dimensions of climate change-, disaster- and health-related statistics (e.g. on COVID-19) and big data, and other emergent concerns necessitating the integration of geospatial, statistical and other related information;**

(d) **To encourage Member States to communicate with the Expert Group on the challenges that prevent the adoption and implementation of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework, to enable the Expert Group to develop and offer its guidance back to Member States;**

(e) **To help Member States and partners to actively support the work of the Expert Group, in particular through participation and resources.**