



## AGUASCALIENTES DECLARATION

### *Better together: Geospatial information for decision making in the Americas<sup>1</sup>*

The Joint Virtual Session of UN-GGIM: Americas and AmeriGEO

9 September 2020

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We, the participants of the UN-GGIM: Americas and AmeriGEO Joint Virtual Session, held on 9 September 2020, having had preparatory discussions and meetings to strengthen and improve collaboration between both bodies on the use of Earth observations, geographic, statistical and other information (hereafter referred to as geospatial data), hereby issue this **Declaration on “Better together: Geospatial information for decision making in the Americas”**.

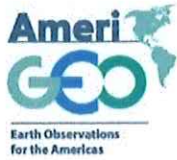
*Bearing in mind* that the global development Agendas, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, and the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, call for globally coordinated action in new data acquisition and integration approaches, employing data and technology for sustainable development and disaster risk reduction;

*Noting* that AmeriGEO is the regional representative of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) in the Americas that seeks to promote collaboration and coordination among GEO members and other organizations, “to realize a future wherein decisions and actions, for the benefit of the region, are informed by coordinated, comprehensive and sustained Earth observations and information”. AmeriGEO also seeks to engage non-GEO members, and to work with GEO flagships and Initiatives to address regional needs;

*Noting further* that the Regional Committee on Geospatial Information Management for the Americas (UN-GGIM: Americas) is a Regional Committee of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) with responsibility for determining relevant regional issues for the management of geospatial information, and which takes the necessary measures to maximize the economic, social and environmental benefits derived from its use; that UN-GGIM: Americas also works to establish links and mechanisms for cooperation with other related geospatial information programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Americas = all the countries in North, Central, and South America, and the Caribbean



*Acknowledging* that UN-GGIM: Americas and AmeriGEO share the objectives of:

- improving coordination and dialogue among Member States and relevant international organizations to share experiences in the application of geospatial data, to establish good practices and the adoption and use of technologies to support the decision-making process;
- increasing Member States capacity to develop and establish user-driven mechanisms for the efficient acquisition, management and use of geospatial data;
- establishing relationships and cooperation mechanisms with other programs to promote the integration of geospatial data to formulate a comprehensive approach to solving national and regional issues and challenges.

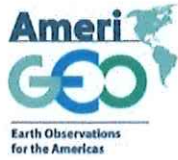
*Recognizing* the leadership and contribution of Member States and regional organizations, such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Environment Program, the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History, the Geocentric Reference System for the Americas, the Central American Integration System, and Red Clara, in conducting preparatory activities in advance of this Joint Virtual Session, which included the creation and management of three advisory working groups on 1) capacity development; 2) communications, cooperation, and coordination; and 3) data information and knowledge sharing, that having conducted robust discussions have tendered recommendations contained herein this Declaration to support the objective of ***Better together: Geospatial information for decision making in the Americas.***

*Affirming* the fundamental importance of collaboration, partnership and coordination among Member States, regional organizations, academia, industry, the private sector, and civil society in the region (hereafter referred to as stakeholders) to advance the regional objective of “Better together”, “leaving no one behind,” has led to the first *Americas symposium* that brings together critical competencies in policy, science, data and technology, to advance regional objectives.

Welcoming the resources and critical competencies that these stakeholders may provide to strengthen capacities essential for the integration of geospatial data to make informed decisions and support national development in the countries and territories of the Americas.

*Recognizing further* that the Joint Virtual Session has provided a participatory and inclusive environment to intensify collaboration at the regional level; strengthened the communication, knowledge-sharing and exchanges on the access, use, management and dissemination of geospatial data.

We the participants of this Joint Virtual Session therefore resolve to:



1. Call upon stakeholders to work together to further define joint work strategies and programs with the objective of mutually advancing regional integration of geospatial data in the Americas;
2. Endorse the creation of a permanent liaison committee of members of this declaration, with the input of subject matter experts as needed, with responsibility for coordinating work and reporting their progress at each member's annual plenary meeting;
3. Convene a second joint session, recognizing its value, at a time to be determined by both parties to consider and evaluate the progress made post this 2020 Joint Session;
4. Support the creation of a geospatial data technical library/repository containing relevant regional projects, initiatives, a registry of technical experts, methods, models, good practices, legislation, and policies that are accessible and available to support the work of stakeholders;
5. Work together to advance the sharing, interoperability, and integration of geospatial data and other new and emerging data sources, to reduce the information divide, foster effective crosssector and interdisciplinary global, regional and local collaboration and partnerships in support of national development priorities, and improving partnerships among stakeholders;
6. Promote cooperation, partnership, and collaboration between and among all relevant regional stakeholders in establishing and/or strengthening existing regional capacity-building frameworks, common standards and application of good practices for achieving national development priorities and sustainable development;
7. Define mechanisms to establish effective communication that will strengthen and promote continued exchange and collaboration among stakeholders;
8. Work together to strengthen awareness, the participation of national experts and capacities across the region, particularly for the least developed countries, small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and middle income countries, in the benefits, use, management and dissemination of geospatial data to support national, regional and global development priorities.
9. Support Member States in their efforts to increase the availability, accessibility and sharing of geospatial data and to leverage existing and available human, technical and financial resources to support the implementation and monitoring of the SDG's and Sendai Framework.



10. Invite interested international/regional organizations, private sector organizations and academia, having similar objectives and interests to partner with AmeriGEO and UN-GGIM Americas and contribute to initiatives and projects that will advance the regional objective of *Better together: Geospatial information for decision making in the Americas*; and

11. Express appreciation to the Joint Virtual Session planning committee and the advisory working groups for their tremendous and valuable efforts in planning and staging of the Joint Virtual Session, for the information made available and training to all participants, establishment of the Academy of the America, to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography, Mexico for providing interpretation services and to participants for their active involvement and interventions.

Issued on 18 September 2020

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