



FRASCATI STATEMENT

Following a recommendation of the 7th Plenary Session of the United Nations Geospatial Information Working Group (UNGIWG) in Santiago de Chile in November 2006 a United Nations Spatial Data Infrastructure Global Partners Meeting (UGPM) was convened by UNGIWG on 1 and 2 March 2007, hosted by the European Space Agency (ESA) at its ESRIN offices in Frascati, Italy. At this dialogue meeting, Representatives from 12 specialized bodies of the United Nations and some 60 Representatives from UN Member States, among which multiple scientific organizations, convened to discuss the UNGIWG Report on the establishment and implementation modalities of a United Nations Spatial Data Infrastructure (UNSDI)¹.

The Representatives, having noted the content of the Report and ancillary, previously prepared material², presented positions of their respective organizations with regard to the desirability and feasibility of establishing the

¹ This Report and its background Compendium can be accessed on-line at:

<http://www.ungiwg.org/unsdi>

² Supporting material, such as the reports of an INSPIRE-UNSDI cooperation meeting with the European Commission DG Joint Research Centre held in December 2006, can be accessed at:

http://sdi.jrc.it/ws/inspire_unsdi

UNSDI, elaborating their potential role in bringing it about, and how such an infrastructure would impact upon their mandate and operations.

The Report of the UNSDI Global Partners Meeting, together with the draft 'UNSDI Strategy Implementation Plan' and background 'UNSDI Compendium' and associated prepared background materials, were reviewed at a special UNGIWG meeting dedicated to defining the concrete way forward for the UNSDI development process, held at UN-OCHA in New York on 7, 8 June 2007. On the basis of the deliberations held at this meeting the UNGIWG Membership, represented by the new OCHA and UNHCR Co-Chairs, Task Group leaders, and Secretariat staff, taking fully account of the opinions expressed at the 'Frascati Meeting', consensually agree on the following:

1. That the UNSDI is a mechanism for facilitating and improving system coherence for the applications and exchange of spatial data for UN activities. Having a UNSDI is substantially conducive to improving decision making for social, economic, and environmental development enhanced at all levels of societies, in peace and safety and thus contributing significantly to the attainment of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.
2. That, due to the complexity of current-day informed decision-making, it is impractical for a single organization or country to produce and maintain the wide variety of data and information needed to support the multitude of interlinked decision-making processes; yet the need for a common understanding of spatially-related thematic issues is paramount. Navigating the complexity of communications between the sectors and agencies to achieve this common understanding necessitates systems for collaboration and sharing data

and information. Spatial Data Infrastructures (SDI) at global, regional, national and local levels, based on common standards and related protocols constitute such a system;

3. That the establishment of a UNSDI as proposed by the UNGIWG forms a fundamental framework to exchange data across many agencies and disciplines for the mutual benefit of both the UN system and its Member Countries. UNSDI, closely coordinated by UNGIWG together with other global, regional and national efforts in the establishment of SDIs, can provide the institutional and technical basis to ensure the (UN) consistency of content to meet user needs in the context of sustainable development in the broadest sense. Within this framework, key data and information in both spatial and non-spatial forms can be collected, maintained and exchanged through committed partnerships.

4. That, in this context, jurisdictional data providers, such as the United Nations entities, the European Commission, National, state / province / county and local governments, commercial data integrators and end users, are the key stakeholders. However, the UNSDI also provides support for improving existing or even establishing new bilateral and multilateral relationships and exchanges with other organizations. Therefore, to maximize the benefit from investment in data collection, maintenance and accessibility from both a UN perspective and that of regional national and local stakeholders, the UN spatial data infrastructure should ensure that stakeholder efforts are focused and continuously coordinated;

5. That a UNSDI ideally should provide benefits for all stakeholders at UN level in the context of the UN MDGs and its current reform process “United Nations, Delivering as One”. In particular the needs of the cooperating members

at this level must be met but there must exist an active dialogue for aligning the UNSDI development effort with other SDI levels and for the inclusion of previously non-participating groups. As the membership grows the data pool widens and there are further important economies of scale and benefits to be realized. The benefits realized through the UNSDI development include, among others:

- Reducing the costs of data production and eliminating duplication of effort through active sharing and re-use of data and information;
- Developing applications more quickly and easily by using existing international data and data/service development standards promoted by, among others, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC);
- Providing better and including near-realtime data and information for informed decision-making;
- Ability to perform cross-jurisdictional and cross-sectoral decision-making, analysis, and operations based on common data and understanding of issues;
- Facilitating the development of knowledge infrastructure and communication networks;

6. That, in addition to the above in paragraph 5, some of the drivers motivating different agencies to cooperate with each other in the context of UNSDI development can be summarized as:

- Investing in change, conform the UN Reform agenda;
- Implementing the UN Millennium Development Goals;
- Increasing global governance.

7. That the development of a UNSDI is a matter of its related cross-jurisdictional cooperation and strategic, scientific and commercial partnerships and established awareness of the value of geospatial information as well as successful widespread use of such data and information. There must be willingness for cooperation between various stakeholders (such as UN Agencies represented in UNGIWG and CGIAR, Members States SDI authorities, academia, SDI umbrella organizations, key NGOs and private companies) to facilitate and promote data sharing, which is crucial to the success of a UNSDI.

8. That the recently formally approved Directive of the European Commission for the establishment of an **IN**frastructure for **SP**atial **InfoR**mation in Europe (INSPIRE), and related development experience gained over the past decade, is a model to be actively considered as a possible 'blueprint' for the UNSDI development.

9. That, whereas collaboration is the agreed future 'business model', the UNSDI development process should engage, in addition to with SDI authorities of Member States, in active and committed partnerships with global and regional SDI organizations for which Global Spatial Data Infrastructure (GSDI) Association, the European umbrella organization for Geographic Information (EUROGI), the European Association of Geographic Information Laboratories (AGILE) and the International Steering Committee for Global Mapping (ISCGM) have formally confirmed their interest.

10. That the active involvement of high-level UN managers and regional and national-level political forces concerned with (UN) SDI development in the context of economic development and environmental protection is essential. The politicians' support provides legitimacy and encourages the necessary financial

investment for UNSDI development. SDI implementation will lead the international community towards knowledge-based societies. Spatial data need to be equitably accessible to all parties and the global commons, and widespread use of these data need to be facilitated by appropriate intellectual property laws and sustained human resource development.

11. That to achieve the above a widely supported SDI capacity building process is necessary in both developing and developed countries, including active consideration of the UNSDI National Coordinating Office (NCO) concept as elaborated by the UGPM meeting and for which the Netherlands³, the Czech Republic⁴, Hungary⁵ and Spain have already undertaken significant pioneering activities.

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³ www.unsd.nl

⁴ www.unsdi.cz

⁵ www.unsdi.hu