

Sixteenth Session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) UN Headquarters, New York, USA, 3 – 7 August 2026

Contribution to the IHO Work Programme 2026

Task 11.12.2 Maintain relationship with United Nations (UN) organizations based in New York, including UN-GGIM

High level summary:

- IHO participated in the sixteenth session of UN-GGIM, including the “International Governance for Geodesy” side event, and was invited on short notice to join the “Policy and technical development at Land & Sea” forum as a panellist.
- IHO delivered an intervention on Agenda Item 13 (Integrated marine geospatial information), supporting the Joint Working Group on Marine Geospatial Information's (JWGMGI) 2026–2030 workplan and Singapore's proposed BBNJ report language.
- IHO delivered an intervention on Agenda Item 15 (Standards), highlighting S-100's operational progress and the new IHO Infrastructure Centre in Busan.
- IHO also held an informal side meeting with UN-DOALOS on the future development of S-121 (Maritime Limits and Boundaries).

Details:

Established by ECOSOC as the apex intergovernmental mechanism on geospatial information, the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) held its sixteenth session from 3–7 August 2026 at UN Headquarters in New York, with side events and expert meetings running 3–4 August ahead of the plenary. The session brought together designated representatives, senior executives and experts from national geospatial authorities, with international organizations, the UN system and other stakeholders. The IHO was represented by Dr. John Nyberg.

On 3 August, IHO took part in the “International Governance for Geodesy” side event, part of the ongoing discussion on options for strengthened international coordination of geodetic infrastructure. On 4 August, IHO was invited on short notice to join the “Policy and technical development at Land & Sea” forum, reflecting the Organization's standing interest in land/sea data integration issues such as vertical datum harmonization.

Under Agenda Item 13 (Integrated marine geospatial information), IHO welcomed the Joint Working Group on Marine Geospatial Information which unites the UN-GGIM Working Group on Marine Geospatial Information and the IHO Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure Working Group on its first anniversary and its 2026–2030 workplan, particularly the four established task teams on policy and legal issues, capacity development, metadata, and C-17/UN-IGIF-Hydro alignment. IHO highlighted two pieces of work as especially valuable, land/sea integration issues such as vertical datum harmonization, and efforts to train AI on the S-100 data model for navigation and non-navigation uses, and reaffirmed its support for the Joint Working Group to serve as advisors for the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement. The IHO endorsed the language proposed by Singapore recognizing the working group's relevance to BBNJ implementation and cooperation with the Agreement's Clearing-House Mechanism.

Under Agenda Item 15 (Implementation and adoption of standards), IHO reported that the four S-100 Phase 1 product specifications, Nautical Charts, Bathymetric Surface, Water Levels, and Surface Currents, have moved from operational availability to active use, with Coastal States now producing official S-101 charts and related products. IHO noted the S-100 Roadmap's growing relevance beyond navigation (Marine Protected Areas, Maritime Limits and Boundaries, Polygonal Demarcations of Sea Areas), the formal establishment of the IHO Infrastructure Centre in Busan, Republic of Korea, and GEBCO's progress in seabed mapping coverage, from 6% in 2017 to over 28% today, while encouraging continued support for crowdsourced bathymetry.

Photos



IHO - sixteenth session of UN-GGIM.



The panel on Land and Sea, New York, during the sixteenth session of UN-GGIM.

Upcoming meetings:

The provisional agenda and dates for the seventeenth session of UN-GGIM (Agenda Item 19) will be confirmed in the Committee's report on this session.