

Terms of Reference of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems

A. Background

1. Global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) have evolved from an early period of limited programmes to a point where a number of systems and their augmentations are operating or planned. In the future, a number of international and national programmes will operate simultaneously and support a broad range of interdisciplinary and international activities. Discussions taking place at national, regional and international levels have underscored the value of GNSS for a variety of applications. The emergence of new GNSS and regional augmentations has focused attention on the need for the coordination of programme plans among current and future operators in order to enhance the utility of GNSS services.

2. The representatives of GNSS core system providers, GNSS augmentation providers and the international organizations primarily associated with the use of GNSS and representatives of international projects in developing countries,

Aware of the overlap of GNSS mission objectives and of the interdisciplinary applications of GNSS services,

Recognizing the advantages of ongoing communication and cooperation among operators and users of GNSS and their augmentations,

Recognizing the need to protect the investment of the current user base of GNSS services through the continuation of existing services,

Aware that the complexity and cost of user equipment should be reduced whenever possible,

Convinced that GNSS providers should pursue greater compatibility and interoperability among all current and future systems in terms of spectrum, signal structures, time and geodetic reference standards to the maximum extent possible,

Desiring to promote the international growth and potential benefits of GNSS,

Noting that General Assembly resolution 59/2 (paragraph 11) invites GNSS and augmentation providers to consider establishing an international committee on GNSS in order to maximize the benefits of the use and applications of GNSS to support sustainable development,

Have agreed to establish on the basis of these non-binding terms of reference, the International Committee on GNSS for the purpose of promoting the use and application of GNSS on a global basis.

B. Objectives

3. The objectives of the Committee are to:

(a) Benefit users of GNSS services through consultations among members of the Committee;

(b) Encourage coordination among providers of GNSS core systems and augmentations in order to ensure greater compatibility and interoperability;

(c) Encourage and promote the introduction and utilization of satellite positioning, navigation and timing services, particularly in the developing countries through assistance with the integration of GNSS services into their infrastructures;

(d) Assist both the members of the Committee and the international user community by, inter alia, serving as the focal point for international information exchange related to GNSS activities, respecting the roles and functions of GNSS service providers and intergovernmental bodies such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO);

(e) Better address future user needs in the GNSS development plans and applications; and

(f) Report periodically on its activities to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

These objectives will be accomplished by an indicative workplan of the International Committee.

C. Participants (Members, Associate Members and Observers)

4. The International Committee will be open to States Members of the United Nations, international organizations or international entities that are responsible for GNSS and their augmentations operating under governmental authority or involved in implementing or promoting GNSS services and applications. There will be three categories of participants in the Committee: Members, Associate Members and Observers.

(a) Members:

Current and future core system providers, including the European Community (Galileo), the Russian Federation (GLONASS) and the United States of America (GPS);

States Members of the United Nations with an active programme in implementing or promoting a wide range of GNSS services and applications (Italy);

Current and future space-based regional or augmentation system providers including, for example, China (Compass), the European Space Agency (EGNOS), India (GAGAN/INRSS), Japan (MSAS/QZSS), Nigeria (NigComsat-1 SBAS, Nigerian Communication Satellite Space Based Augmentation System) and the United States (WAAS);

(b) Associate Members:

International and regional organizations and associations dealing with GNSS services and applications, including the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the Civil GPS Service Interface Committee (CGSIC), the International Association of Geodesy (IAG), the International Cartographic Association (ICA), the International GNSS Service (IGS, formerly International GPS Service), the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS), the International Earth Rotation and Reference Systems Service (IERS), the Fédération

internationale des géomètres (FIG), the European Position Determination System (EUPOS) and the International Council for Science (ICSU);

(c) Observers:

The Committee on Space Research (COSPAR), the Bureau international des poids et mesures (BIPM), the International Association of Institutes of Navigation (IAIN), the Union radio-scientifique internationale (URSI) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

5. The Committee will make decisions by consensus of the Members. Associate Members and Observers will provide advice, monitor the work of the Committee, participate in working groups established in accordance with paragraph 8 below, participate in activities identified in the workplan of the International Committee and report back to their own organizations. Members and Associate Members may host meetings of the Committee and chair and participate in working groups and host or provide support to a permanent secretariat that may be established to support the Committee. The admission of new Members, Associate Members and Observers will be with the consensus of the Members of the Committee.

D. Procedures of work, structure and organization

6. The proposed structure for an International Committee could consist of a chairperson, a plenary session of the Committee, an executive secretariat and working groups. The chair will rotate on an annual basis among the Members and Associate Members.

7. The Committee will convene at least once every year in plenary session. Meetings of the Committee will be organized by the designated host. Each Member, Associate Member and Observer should designate its principal and its point of contact. Any change to the principals and/or points of contact should be communicated to the chairperson of the Committee.

8. The Committee may establish, as mutually agreed and on an ad hoc basis, working groups to investigate specific areas of interest, cooperation and coordination and to report at subsequent plenary sessions. Continuation of each working group requires confirmation at each plenary session by the Members.

9. Recommendations resulting from the plenary sessions or the findings and recommendations of working groups will be decided on the basis of consensus of the plenary session, do not create legal obligations and will be acted upon at the discretion of each Member, Associate Member or Observer.

10. The Committee may revise these terms of reference on the basis of proposals made by Members and adopted by consensus.

11. The Committee may revise the workplan on the basis of proposals made by Members, Associate Members and Observers and adopted by consensus of the Members, in consultation with the Associate Members.

12. Members, Associate Members and Observers will fund their own participation in the activities of the International Committee, including the working groups. In the event that the Committee establishes an executive secretariat, support (in-kind or direct funding) will be determined by the Members and Associate Members of the Committee.