BACKGROUND
The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored urgent gaps in our knowledge of where health facilities are located as we work to ensure equitable access to vaccines through initiatives like COVAX. Our collective experience accessing data throughout this pandemic, and in prior years, has led to one unequivocal fact: we as a global community do not know where all health facilities are located.

A standardized and open Global Health Facilities Database (GHFD) that serves as the central repository for health facility information will help Member States better prepare for health emergencies, increase their capacity to leverage data, create more efficient, effective, and targeted programs, and transform data availability from a global gap into a global public good.

This database will also provide critical insights that ensure every person in every community knows where to go for care, improving access to primary care and driving progress toward universal health coverage.

The GHFD is being established in direct response to wide and urgent acknowledgements made at the Eleventh Session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), which is co-chaired by the UN Statistical Commission (UN Stat Comm) and the UN Geospatial Information Section (UN GIS), to address ongoing global priorities by investigating the nexus of geospatial information and health.

This open session will provide an opportunity to announce the GHFD as a global public good and explore how strengthening the nexus of statistics, geospatial data and health will improve health emergency preparedness and ongoing health challenges at national, regional and country levels. The session will include opening remarks before hosting two thirty-minute panel discussions between three guest speakers. The first panel will focus on the health implications of establishing a GHFD while the second panel will focus on how bringing together GIS and statistics create opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and progress.