



PRESS STATEMENT

GHANA INSTITUTE OF GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY(GIGS)

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GIGS Hails UN Adoption of the Equal Earth Map as a Correction to 450 Years of Cartographic Injustice Against Africa

The Ghana Institute of Governance and Security (GIGS) warmly welcomes the resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on Friday, September 4, 2026, endorsing the Equal Earth projection as a fairer alternative to the 16th-century Mercator map. Sponsored by Togo on behalf of the African Union and co-sponsored by the Bahamas, the resolution passed by a decisive vote of 164 in favour to 1 against, with six abstentions Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Moldova, Serbia, and Ukraine. The United States cast the sole dissenting vote.

GIGS regards this as a landmark act of global justice. Alongside this year's General Assembly resolution recognising the Transatlantic Slave Trade as one of the gravest crimes against humanity, it stands as one of two of the most consequential steps the United Nations has taken in defence of Africa's dignity.

A Map Is Never Neutral

Togo's Foreign Minister, Robert Dussey, told the General Assembly ahead of the vote that "a fair world begins with a fair map," and that "a map is never neutral." GIGS endorses this without reservation. Maps are not passive renderings of geography they are instruments of power. They shape how children learn to see the world, how investors judge where opportunity lies, how diplomats weigh whose voice carries weight, and how people come to understand their own place, and their continent's place, in global affairs. A map that visually diminishes a continent of 1.4 billion people does not merely misinform. It conditions generations to underestimate Africa's scale, its resources, and its significance.

Correcting 450 Years of Distortion

For over four and a half centuries, the Mercator projection designed in 1569 as a navigational aid for European sailors has been mistaken, and mistaught, as an accurate picture of the world. It inflates regions near the poles, including Europe, North America, and Greenland, while shrinking equatorial regions, above all Africa. The distortion is stark: Africa is, in reality, roughly fourteen times larger than Greenland, yet generations of atlases, classroom wall-maps, news broadcasts, and digital platforms have shown the two as nearly comparable in size.

This misrepresentation has never been merely aesthetic. It operates through three reinforcing channels:

1. **Visual shrinking through map projections** decades of unquestioned use of Mercator-style maps in classrooms, newsrooms, and public institutions, normalising a diminished image of Africa in the global imagination.
2. **Artificial colonial borders** boundaries drawn in European capitals with little regard for ethnic, cultural, or historical realities, whose governance consequences persist across the continent today.
3. **Modern technological negligence** outdated, distorting default projections built into digital maps, search engines, and educational software, carrying a colonial-era bias into new generations through modern tools.

Correcting the map is therefore not a symbolic gesture. It is one deliberate step toward correcting the broader architecture of perception that has long under-represented Africa's true scale and standing in the world.

A Vote With Global Resonance

That 164 member states an overwhelming majority of the international community backed this resolution reflects a widening global consensus that historical injustices embedded in ordinary tools deserve deliberate correction. GIGS notes, too, that France announced ahead of the vote it would abandon the Mercator projection in its own official maps a signal that this reckoning belongs to the world, not to Africa alone.

The resolution is not legally binding and does not prohibit continued use of the Mercator projection for the technical purposes it remains well suited to, including maritime and aerial navigation. What it achieves instead is a normative shift: it encourages governments, schools, media houses, international organisations, and technology companies to adopt equal-area projections such as Equal Earth wherever relative size and proportion matter above all, in education and public communication.

GIGS calls on:

- **Ghanaian and African educational authorities** to expedite the adoption of the Equal Earth projection in school curricula, textbooks, and teaching materials across the continent.
- **African governments and the African Union** to sustain the momentum of the Correct the Map campaign, extending it to complementary reforms addressing the governance legacies of colonial-era borders.
- **Global technology companies and media organisations** to update default map settings across their platforms, so that a resolution passed in New York becomes a genuinely different visual experience for the billions who consult these tools daily.



- **The international community** to carry forward the spirit of this year's twin resolutions on the Transatlantic Slave Trade and on the world map as a foundation for continued honest reckoning with historical injustice.

GIGS extends its profound gratitude to the United Nations General Assembly, to Togo's leadership under Foreign Minister Robert Dussey, to the African Union, to the Bahamas as co-sponsor, and to the advocacy organizations including Africa No Filter and Speak Up Africa whose sustained campaigning made this outcome possible.

A fair world does indeed begin with a fair map. Ghana stands ready to play its part in ensuring that this correction on paper becomes a correction in perception, policy, and practice.

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