

Official Opening Session

***UN-GGIM International Forum on Policy and Legal Frameworks for Geospatial
Information
and
Fifth Regional Committee on
United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific
Plenary Meeting
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Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia***

INAUGURATION ADDRESS TEXT

by

**Yang Berhormat
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1. Assalamualaikum, a very good morning and *selamat datang* to all the participants and guests. I am honoured to be here and I take this opportunity to thank the Chair of the organising committee for inviting me to officially launch the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) International Forum on Policy and Legal Frameworks for Geospatial Information in conjunction with the Fifth United Nations Regional Committee on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM-AP) Plenary Meeting. I am pleased to note that this event is jointly organised by the Secretariat of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) and the Secretariat of the United Nations Regional Committee on Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific (UN-GGIM-AP) in collaboration with the Department of Survey and Mapping Malaysia (JUPEM), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

2. In June 2014, UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (GGIM), reported on the Activities related to sustainable development and the post-2015 development agenda. The Report stressed that we cannot measure and monitor sustainable development over time in a consistent manner without geography, place and location. The Report recognized the importance of consistent, precise positioning in predicting, monitoring and managing global challenges, including those related to climate change, disease pandemics, disaster recovery and food shortages. Thus, availability and accessibility to high quality, timely and reliable geospatial information is the key towards achieving the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This must be accompanied by sound enabling policies, legislation and processes. Formulating the right policy and legal frameworks on geospatial information will definitely support progress towards achieving these sustainable development goals.

3. Geospatial information has become part of our everyday life. The demand for geospatial information in decision-making processes has grown at a remarkable and accelerated pace. There are always elements of geospatial data and information being utilised at certain stages in decision-making. Major advances, which are being made in the field of information and communication technologies have revolutionizes information sharing and global information flows. Such scenario has tremendously transformed and enabled governments as well as empowering citizens and communities in new ways so much so, they

have redefined governance and accountability. It has also created growth in jobs and contributed to economic and wealth creation.

4. In this regard, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment or NRE provides more than 80 percent of up-to-date, high quality and reliable geospatial information particularly in land development, managing natural resources, environmental preservation and conservation as well as disaster risk reduction strategies. Thus new technologies such as Unmanned Aerial System with higher resolution sensors play an important role in providing up-to-date geospatial information to manage and enforce the environmental and conservation legislation of the country. This technology is complemented with Lidar and SAR data to ensure enforcement effort is at its best.

5. All these advances can be integrated and further leveraged to pursue the sustainable development agenda by developing strong partnership and commitment between all parties either globally, regionally or locally to encourage sustainable growth and at the same time safeguarding the environment for our children and future generation. Cooperation and partnership must be permissible and beneficial to all stakeholders, either cooperation between governments, between government agencies, between government and private sector, academia or civil societies. The lack of such cooperation will slow down progress in achieving the targets.

6. I understand that this forum has brought together global experts in geospatial information, policy and legal, to discuss issues relating to the collection, use, provenance and accessibility of data. They are also here to share their experiences and approaches in the areas of data sharing, data protection and open data policies, together with privacy and security concerns. I also understand that approaches and implications for the licensing, use and reuse of geospatial information will also be addressed. The need for geospatial information is important. Thus, the issue of access must be addressed urgently. Hence, we must continuously improve any existing policy and legal frameworks to ensure easy access and efficient management of geospatial information.

7. In this regard, the Government of Malaysia is also aware of the need to have appropriate and strong policy and legal frameworks for geospatial information management to ensure effective utilization and contribution. It is my most sincere hope to see that the

discussion among member states and experts at this Forum provide the basis for policy and legal frameworks that is appropriate to all in view of the rapid development in technologies and methodologies as well as the needs and aspirations for citizens to be better informed. Therefore, this International Forum and Plenary Meeting are indeed timely and beneficial, not just within our national context but also in the context of regional and global sharing of data and information to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

8. JUPEM is one of the leading departments using innovative technologies and processes to provide reliable and consistent geospatial data throughout government. In addition to providing maps for the country's security agencies, JUPEM's seamless geospatial data remains the basic fundamental data for other agencies to use. To ensure the deliverable of coordinated and better quality data, a special committee is established under the Malaysian Cabinet Directive. The Committee, The National Spatial Data Coordination Committee, is headed by the Director General of Survey and Mapping Malaysia. This committee oversees and coordinates the overall geospatial activities in the country to avoid duplication, especially in data collection and to encourage sharing of information.

9. Related to this matter, the Malaysian Centre for Geospatial Data Infrastructure (MaCGDI), another agency under NRE, coordinates the access and delivery of this fundamental geospatial data required by government agencies through the Malaysian Geospatial Data Infrastructure (MyGDI) portal.

10. The Government of Malaysia will continue to ensure that proper infrastructures are in place to support and encourage the use of geospatial information for the benefit of the people and in support of sustainable growth and development without risking the security of the country.

11. The Ministry also believes that there is a need to balance the benefits of a more open information environment with the concerns for privacy and security, and this must be adequately addressed. We recognized the sensitivity of data acquired using latest technology such as the Unmanned Aerial system (UAS). Thus, Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) and JUPEM are taking action to formulate the necessary guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the proper and orderly operations of Unmanned Aerial system (UAS) for data acquisition and mapping.

12. There are other agencies under the Ministry, which provide environmental information that is essential for sustainable growth and development. Geological information, information on underground natural resources such as minerals, hydrological information, all remains vital to the nation's sustainability and mitigation of disasters. Geo-referenced maps on mineral anomaly, potential underwater sources are extensively used in mining and investigation for water supply. This information is also critical in the safeguarding and conservation of our natural resources. All these information must now comply with acceptable international standard, be interoperable and should be available and ready for sharing, particularly amongst government agencies.

13. Another geospatial data set that is critical is of underground utilities. These data are usually kept by the utility providers themselves and are not always of sufficient accuracy let alone readily available. Efforts have been made through the formulation of guidelines by the government to ensure that accurate as-built underground utilities data be acquired during installation of new underground utilities and encourages the systematic mapping of existing buried utilities. JUPEM has developed and is the custodian for the National Underground Utility Database. All of these as-built dataset are to be deposited into this Database and the data, in digital format, should be readily available for future reference.

14. I am pleased to reiterate that Malaysia subscribes to the global agenda on sustainable development. We will continue to utilize our capability and technological know-how to achieve the goals and targets set at the international stage. In this regard, we made reference to the 17 goals and 169 targets as laid down by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in particular targets under clean water and sanitation, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water and life on land. These efforts will be part and parcel of our agenda to mainstream sustainable development in our national aspiration to achieve the status of a developed country in the near future.

15. I would like to commend the Organising Committee especially JUPEM once again for playing a major role in organizing this event. And on behalf of the Government of Malaysia, my gratitude for the generous support given by the UN-GGIM Secretariat and UN-GGIM-AP Secretariat.

16. Lastly I wish you every success in all your deliberations. And on that note, it is with great pleasure I officially open the UN-GGIM International Forum on Policy and Legal Frameworks for Geospatial Information and the Fifth UN-GGIM-AP Plenary Meeting.

Thank you