



**UN-GGIM**  
UNITED NATIONS  
COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON  
GLOBAL GEOSPATIAL  
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

**International Forum on Policy and Legal Framework for Geospatial Information  
18 & 19 October 2016, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**

**Summary of the International Forum**

The UN-GGIM International Forum on Policy and Legal Frameworks for Geospatial Information provided unique opportunity and platform for a very informed dialogue and discussions to better understand the policy, legislative and legal processes and implications pertaining to the availability and accessibility of geospatial information. Participants came from the geospatial information, legal, policy and regulatory communities and included those from the public sector, the private sector and academia.

Session moderators, speakers and participants engaged one another on a range of topics and issues, considered the various drivers, challenges and approaches to ensure that geospatial information enjoys the widest utility while considering issues such as privacy, data protection and national security. Topics addressed ranges from policy and legal challenges around the release and accessibility of official data, legislative and regulatory framework around the use of unmanned systems with increasing machine-learning capabilities. The Forum also addressed policy and legal challenges within varied and innovative data collection environment, data sharing, interoperability - of standards, systems and legislations, and open data towards whole-of-government efficiencies, national prosperity and in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The International Forum was officiated by the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Malaysia, attracted 495 registered participants from over 30 countries. At the official opening session, there were another 25 more participants, primarily senior officials and heads of departments within the Malaysian Government that were invited to the official opening session that included a keynote presentation from United Nations Statistics Division. There were 125 international participants, comprising 29 official Member State delegations. Sixteen speakers of rich varied backgrounds and immense experiences from the public, private and academic circles spoke in the four sessions, each session ably moderated that allowed for good interactions and discussions.

There was unanimous consensus on the importance of the topic, and it was reiterated several times that this was the first time ever so many lawyers and geospatial practitioners had been brought together under one roof for an informed dialogue and debate. Participants also unanimously acknowledged the growing need for geospatial practitioners to understand the policy, legal and regulatory processes and their implications. Similarly, the legal practitioners and regulators also need to understand the broader usefulness and benefits of geospatial information. All agreed that there is an urgent need for proactive and sustainable data eco-systems to support and inform sustainable development goals.

The Forum thus was very successful, had extremely productive and interactive series of sessions that discussed many policy and legal challenges. The Forum considerably raise awareness and recognition that –

- a) There remained significant policy and legal challenges to address, including issues related to the timeliness and comparability, availability and accessibility, privacy and security of data, and open data.
- b) Rapidly changing societal access to information that are location bias together with creative and innovative unmanned, remotely sensing and data collection technologies demands geospatial practitioners to confront policy, legal and regulatory challenges upfront rather than later.
- c) Policy and legal issues impact geospatial information management at the local, national and thus international levels; and must be addressed and balanced within any national strategies, policies and legislations.
- d) Good and effective policy and legal frameworks evolve over time and should respond to societal progress and technological developments, including as machine-learning environments become more prominent.

The outcome of all these discussions and debates were reflected in the *Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Policy and Legal Frameworks for Geospatial Information*. The Declaration was unanimously adopted by the participants, and later adopted by the UN-GGIM-AP Plenary. With the Declaration, there is a defined path forward for the Committee of Experts and the global geospatial information community.

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