

Subject: “Urgent - Sixth High-Level Forum on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management”

On behalf of Mr. Stefan Schweinfest and Mr. Steve Blair, we regret to inform you that the United Nations Statistics Division, as Secretariat for the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, and Ordnance Survey of Great Britain have jointly agreed that it is no longer possible to proceed with the Sixth High-Level Forum on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management, scheduled to be held in Windsor, United Kingdom from 20 – 22 April 2020.

In the context of the growing global health crisis posed by the spread of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak, and the World Health Organisation’s declaration of a global pandemic on 11 March, we believe it is in everyone’s best interest to make this difficult announcement now.

We understand that colleagues were looking forward to participating in the High-Level Forum. However, we are also aware that many delegates, sponsors and invited speakers are increasingly anxious with the evolving COVID-19 outbreak situation, and the related health and travel measures being implemented around the world. We have been monitoring the situation closely and have taken the difficult decision that it is no longer feasible to run a successful event. We believe this is the right decision to announce at this moment of time.

We sincerely thank the global geospatial information community for considering, planning and preparing to participate and contribute to the Sixth High-Level Forum, and to everyone involved in the planning, preparation and organization of this major event during the last 18 months. We also appreciate that some delegates will have committed to travel plans and recognise the inconvenience that this news may cause.

We are working hard to explore whether it is possible to conduct some aspects of the programme virtually using webinars – for example, the launch of the Implementation Guide of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and the Third Review of the Future Trends impacting the global geospatial sector. We commit to keeping you updated on our plans over the coming weeks. However, in the meantime we would encourage members of the global geospatial information community to consider keeping availability in your calendar on Monday 20th and Tuesday 21st April in anticipation of such an invitation.

Cognizant of the dynamic situation at this time, we thank you for your continued understanding and support, especially for those who have shown patience as we considered our options during the past few weeks. We would like to take this opportunity to wish you well and trust that our decision not to proceed with the High-Level Forum will, in some small way, contribute positively to the global fight to combat the spread and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.