

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

OPENING REMARKS

BY

MR. LIU ZHENMIN

**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
AFFAIRS**

UNITED NATIONS WORLD GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION CONGRESS

Deqing, Zhejiang Province, China, 19 November 2018

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen

It is my great pleasure and honor to welcome you to this first United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress. As we gather here in Deqing, China to discuss ‘The Geospatial Way to a Better World’, I thank the Government of China, through the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Government of Zhejiang Province, for graciously hosting this landmark global event with my Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Among the audience, I particularly welcome the participation of so many honorable Ministers and senior officials representing their respective governments.

Distinguished delegates,

When we gathered today in Deqing in this new and impressive conference centre built specifically for the Congress, this meeting has already become a historic event of a multi-stakeholder community, consisting of governments, industry, the private sector, academia and civil society. We have waited for such a Congress for 8 years since we convened the UN committee on Global Geospatial Information Management in 2011. It has been my wish over the past year that ‘the World meets Deqing, and geospatial information management meets the World’ here in November 2018. As we now take in the enormity and scale of this Congress before us, and with the detail and effort that has gone into its planning and preparation, I am already confident that the United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress will be a resounding success – and the World has indeed met Deqing!

At this juncture, I wish to thank especially the ‘organisational’ mechanisms of the Congress. Given its global scale, importance and dimension, the overall logistical preparations and oversight of the Congress have been guided by the Congress Steering Committee which has been Co-Chaired by Mr. Kurexi, the Vice Minister of Ministry of Natural Resources, Mr. Feng Fei, the Executive Deputy Governor of Zhejiang Province, and myself. The International Advisory Committee was established by the Steering Committee to develop the substantive programme and content of the Congress. The Congress Bureau has been established which now provides the necessary guidance and oversight to ensure the successful implementation and conclusion of the Congress. Most importantly to many of you as participants who have journeyed from afar, the Local Organizing Committee of the Congress have ensured that all of the logistical arrangements are in place for you to be here in Deqing and able to participate in this very special event.

To the many dedicated individuals involved in organizing and delivering this World Geospatial Information Congress, a very heartfelt thank to all of you! Successfully delivering such a large milestone event is not possible without utilising key inputs, leadership and experiences from global government and industry experts such as yourselves.

Excellencies and distinguished delegates

During the next 3 days, you will hear from global experts and convene detailed technical sessions to address critical geospatial information topics to assist all countries in their journey towards attaining sustainable development. Your dedication, expertise and guidance – in geospatial data, methods, frameworks, tools, and platforms – is urgently needed. The data needs for the United Nations 2030 Agenda with its 17 globally agreed Sustainable Development Goals are great, and time is not on our side. Reliable, timely, accessible and disaggregated geospatial information must be brought to bear to measure progress, inform decision-making and ensure effective and inclusive national and sub-national programs that will chart the path towards the ‘Geospatial Way to a Better World’, to assist in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and transform our world for the better.

Distinguished delegates,

What we most need in these times is “Trust”, trust in data and trust in authoritative information. Geospatial information and services are near ubiquitous in this age of smart devices. We all must learn, together, how to apply them appropriately. Current and credible geospatial information must be brought to bear for effective, inclusive and accountable national and sub-national programs that will transform our world for the better, and improve the lives of all citizens around the world. Governments and all stakeholders and partners must keep pace with the times. We all must work together to develop integrated geospatial information frameworks to address the many challenges facing humanity today, essential for our planet, our peace and our prosperity.

Trust is primarily a result of two essential ingredients: quality and communication. That is why events like this one are so important. Using the United Nation’s convening power, we do not only bring together the best brains from all around the world and from all relevant sectors; through our open spirit of exchange of knowledge we create mutual understanding and lay the foundations for effective global cooperation in the future. We at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs remain deeply committed to support you in your work, not only at this Congress, but also in the future, through our Secretariat of the United Nations Committee on Global Geospatial Information Management.

Distinguished delegates,

Moganshan Declaration to be issued by this Congress will send a very important political message that we, the international community of geospatial information, are prepared to support member states in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We still line up to our promises!

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

I wish you a productive and enjoyable United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress here in Deqing, and I look forward to the outcomes contained within your Moganshan Declaration at the conclusion of the Congress.

Thank you.