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ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**

**Opening Statement
Chengdu Forum on UN-GGIM Global Map for Sustainable Development:
Development & Applications in Urban Hazard Mapping
Chengdu, China, 15 October 2013**

Your Excellency Mr. Xu Deming, Vice Minister, Ministry of Land and Resources, Director-General, National Administration of Surveying, Mapping and Geoinformation of China;

Your Excellency Dr. Wang Ning, Vice Governor of Sichuan Province of China;

Dr. Li Pengde, Deputy Director General, National Administration of Surveying, Mapping and Geoinformation of China, President of UN-GGIM Asia-Pacific;

Dear Participants and Colleagues,

On behalf of the United Nations, I warmly welcome you to this Chengdu Forum on the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management, or UN-GGIM.

I am delighted to see so many professionals gathered here. We have representatives from the Asia-Pacific region as well as other regions, international organizations and the geospatial industry. This is a truly global Forum.

I wish to extend our sincere appreciation to Mr. Xu Deming, , Dr. Li Pengde, – and their team – for organizing and hosting this Forum.

I also wish to acknowledge the support of Dr. Wang Ning, Vice Governor of the Sichuan Province, the Sichuan Government and people of Sichuan, for hosting us in this beautiful city of Chengdu.

I also thank the Regional Committee of UN-GGIM for Asia and the Pacific for its efforts in promoting the work of UN-GGIM-Asia-Pacific, including the Chengdu Forum.

This is a long list of people to thank. If anything, it shows that it takes many stakeholders working together to move the UN-GGIM agenda forward.

Distinguished participants,

The UN-GGIM agenda is evolving at a time when our world is facing multiple challenges in achieving sustainable development.

Accurate, timely and reliable geospatial information is playing a vital role in helping advance sustainable development across the globe. The United Nations recognizes, and is deeply appreciative of international cooperation and country-led initiatives such as this Forum.

Indeed, we are meeting here in China for the second successive year, under the auspices of the GGIM China Trust Fund Project. The project, entitled “Geospatial Information Management Capacity Development in China and other Developing Countries”, covers a five-year period, from 2013 to 2017.

The Trust Fund was created to strengthen the geospatial information capacity in China and other developing countries. It is meant to:

- support institutional and policy frameworks;
- data acquisition, management and delivery;
- enabling technologies and information services;
- and the requirements for data standards, sharing, accessibility, and dissemination.

Strengthening this geospatial information ‘supply chain’ is inclusive of the need to integrate multiple sources of information – traditional and non-traditional – while meeting the specific needs of the end user. This has particular relevance to sustainable development, disaster management, and humanitarian aid in developing countries in the region.

I congratulate the National Administration of Surveying, Mapping and Geoinformation of China for their foresight in initiating this Trust Fund, and associated annual Forums. The initiative represents a substantial investment and commitment by the Chinese Government. Developing countries in particular, and the global geospatial community in general, will benefit immensely from this initiative.

Excellencies,

As many of you will know, the original Chengdu Forum had to be postponed at very short notice in April 2013 due to the devastating earthquake that struck the Sichuan Province on the morning of April 20. This recent earthquake experience in the region reinforces, more than ever, the importance and relevance of this Forum and its theme.

This Chengdu Forum provides a valuable platform for discussing the development and provision of consistent geospatial information and modeling techniques. Such techniques can enable nations to better understand and implement natural hazard impact mapping and analysis, in urban environments.

The programme is structured so that you can share experiences and methodologies in the production, management, analysis, modeling and dissemination of hazard related geospatial information.

This topic is also highly relevant globally. The Rio+20 outcome document recognized that geospatial information is crucial for both sustainable development and humanitarian assistance. More importantly, it acknowledged the importance of comprehensive hazard and risk assessments, and knowledge and information sharing, including the use of reliable geospatial information.

I anticipate that there will be a consensus on the vital role of geospatial information in all phases of hazard and disaster risk management and reduction. This will extend the ability for nations, not only to map their geography and topography, but also those areas that are vulnerable to natural hazards, particular in urban environments. It will also provide better understanding to decision-makers and emergency responders.

Furthermore, I hope that you will also reach agreement on urban hazard and disaster mapping as a key input into the development of a Global Map for Sustainable Development by UN-GGIM. This new information will no doubt play an important role in supporting the United Nations post-2015 development agenda.

These important topics will provide input into the global decision-making mechanism – the Committee of Experts on UN-GGIM.

At the United Nations, we will do our best to develop and advance UN-GGIM together with all the Member States, with support from all of you.

I wish you a productive meeting over the next three days. Thank you for your continued support to the work and vision of UN-GGIM.

Thank you.
