

HONORABLE DR XAVIER JAYAKUMAR
Minister of Water, Land and Natural Resources Malaysia
20th June 2019, Kuala Lumpur

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon,

1. First and foremost, I would like to thank the organising committee for inviting me to the 21st International Surveyor Congress (ISC) and the Kuala Lumpur International Seminar on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management. On behalf of the Government of Malaysia, it gives me great pleasure to extend to all participants and delegates a very warm welcome to the beautiful city of Kuala Lumpur. In particular, I want to extend our warm welcome to the thirty-three expert representatives of Member States of the United Nations and another eleven experts from United Nations systems and related stakeholders here for a United Nations convened expert consultation and meeting. I am told the forty-four experts here this week came from twenty-five countries. I certainly hope the expert representatives here will also have the opportunity to enjoy some sights and taste some simple food our country and this city has to offer.

2. We are indeed very honoured and privileged to host all the expert representatives here this week in Kuala Lumpur. On behalf of the Government of Malaysia, I thank you for your contribution to what I am told is a milestone event, an expert consultation and meeting on the development of the Implementation Guide of the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework. I am told this Implementation Guide is immensely valuable to developing countries including Malaysia, and also to developed countries. This United Nations Implementation Guide provides guidance on appropriate and feasible approaches for governments to organize and improve our policies and programmes to ensure that, as a responsible government, we have timely evidence to drive our policies, programmes and projects to deliver services and progress to every corner of our country and community. On behalf of the Government of Malaysia, our appreciation to the United Nations Secretariat for the privilege to jointly organized this expert consultation and meeting. It is our honour to host this event and the esteemed group of expert representatives here this week.

3. I commend the Department of Survey and Mapping Malaysia and the Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia for being far sighted. During these few days here in this hotel, we have a number of events. The 21st International Surveyors Congress, the United Nations Fourth Expert Consultation and Meeting, and also the meeting of the Executive Board of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific, the meeting of the Council of the ASEAN Federation of Land Surveying and Geomatics, and the 58th Annual General Meeting of the Institution itself. This is indeed an opportune time to renew contacts and friendships, to exchange experience and practices, discuss issues and challenges that are of mutual interest amongst the many participants and delegates, some of whom have travelled far to be here. It is gratifying to note that a wide range of important matters are being considered, not just local, but also regional and global matters. It is also a time where members

of the Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia should be asking how to lift your game and contribute more effectively to ensure our country's development and progress are balance and benefits all.

4. I also like to congratulate the organisers, sponsors and co-sponsors, partners and supporting organisations, and the many individuals for their great efforts to ensure the success of all these events.

5. "Everything happens somewhere". Previously, decisions are made based on knowledge of the environment provided by maps, plans and columns of data on value, condition and cost; the better the maps and plans, the better the decisions. Today, geospatial information provides the integrative platform for all digital data that has a location dimension to it, in Malaysia, much of which are produced and provided by surveyors. It gives the information between a place, its people and their activities, and is used to illustrate what is happening where, helping us to understand why and to effectively design appropriate responses and interventions. It is important that we have the "how". Governments are in the business of the "how", how to ensure equitable and sustainable access to and use of water, land, natural resources. It is critical that the "how" be informed by the "what", "why" and "where".

6. There is a growing recognition amongst both governments and the private sector that an understanding of location and place is a vital component of effective decision-making. Even citizens with no recognised expertise in geospatial information, and who are unlikely ever to be familiar with the term, are also increasingly using and interacting with geospatial information, indeed in some cases, they are contributing to its collection – often unknowingly. Several important technology-driven trends are likely to have a major impact in the coming years, creating previously unimaginable amounts of location-referenced information and questioning our very understanding of what constitutes geospatial information.

7. These developments offer significant opportunities but also present challenges, both in terms of application and policy implementation. Indeed, surveyors play a significant role in meeting these challenges and ensuring that the potential benefits can be realised to ensure that the full value of geospatial information can be maximised.

8. Surveyors, as responsible professionals, should always "Survey the Future", the theme of the 21st ISC. You need to understand the trends by continually monitoring progress and development in many related domains, so that timely, evidence-based responses can be made. For example, consumer and businesses are increasingly expecting more details, an area is that of three-dimensional representation of cities to enable effective planning, management and to optimise resources. This 3-D representation should not be just about the physical or natural features alone, it must include all aspects of data and information produced and provided by surveyors and others including statistical data. I would think this 3-D representation will easily include values, construction cost, building information models, property management and condition information. Increasingly, 3-D will be an intrinsic part of the core geospatial data, rather than a distinctive add-on as it is now. Much of the influence for the developments in these areas comes from outside of the traditional surveying sphere.

9. My Ministry acknowledges the importance of geospatial information for nation-building. Increases in the amount and variability of data, combined with recent advances in digital and communications technologies, have seen the emergence of geospatial information as a significant contributor to better policy formulation and responses to address current social, economic and environmental challenges facing citizens, communities and countries. Geospatial information is being described as the nation's 'digital currency' for evidence-based decision-making, a critical component of knowledge economy. It provides the means to integrate a wide variety of government services that contribute to social wellbeing, economic growth and environmental sustainability.

10. As the contribution of geospatial information in decision-making increases, maintaining trust and confidence in the information being used will be vital and will continue to form a critical part of the role of the government. I also believe the government must play the role in driving and supporting cross-sector collaboration for reliable and timely data and information for evidence-based responses. Effective collaboration within the surveying disciplines, improving interoperability and integration between geospatial and other disciplines such as statistics and the private sector and scientific and research community. The lack of such collaboration will hamper the timeliness of evidence-based responses.

11. The Integrated Geospatial Information Framework adopted by the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations is most timely. The Government of Malaysia commends the United Nations Secretariat, the World Bank and the many actors within the Committee of Experts for this important effort and look forward to the practical guidance being developed. This Framework will similarly provide the basis, reference and mechanism for Malaysia to develop its integrated location-based information management, to deliver our nation building and sustainable development priorities. Malaysia wishes to improve its services to citizens and communities, improve capacity to deploy location-based services, enhance informed policy and decision-making processes, and timely evidence-based responses.

12. The Department of Survey and Mapping Malaysia, known locally as JUPEM, is one of the leading departments using innovative technologies and processes to provide reliable geospatial data throughout the Government. In addition to supporting the country's security agencies, JUPEM's seamless geospatial data remains the underlying fundamental data source for other agencies to use. To ensure the delivery of coordinated and quality data, a select committee was 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.

13. In this regard, the Ministry will work with the Department of Survey and Mapping Malaysia, and also stakeholders, to continuously improve existing policy and legal frameworks to ensure that geospatial information is properly and effectively managed, is available and useable by Government, business, communities and citizens as appropriate.

14. I am delighted to share with you that Malaysia has moved towards becoming a “spatially enabled government” and a “spatially enabled society”. All professional surveyors are part of this spatial enablement with our respective responsibilities and roles.

15. The backbone of this spatial enablement is the infrastructure provided by my Ministry through JUPEM, namely the Geocentric Datum of Malaysia (or GDM2000), National Digital Cadastral Database, National Geospatial Data Centre, National Underground Utility Database, Malaysia Real Time Kinematic Network, Tidal Network and Precise Levelling Network, Gravity Network, MyGEOID, Height Modernisation System, the National Atlas and others.

16. 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.

17. Hence, I am pleased to reiterate that Malaysia seeks to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We will continue to utilise our capability and know-how to achieve the 17 goals and 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda, 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 this Government’s efforts for sustainable development and to achieve the status of a developed country in the near future.

18. Events such as these provide such valuable opportunity for everyone to share experiences and knowledge. I am sure you will have fruitful and rewarding exchanges these few days. I wish you every success and look forward to learning about the outcomes.

19. On that note, it is my pleasure now to officially declare open the 21st International Surveyors Congress, the United Nations Fourth Expert Consultation on the Development of the Implementation Guide of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, and the Kuala Lumpur International Seminar on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management.

Thank you.