

UNGIWG-UNSDI Global Partners Meeting (UGPM)
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1, 2 March 2007

Opening Statement by Ms. Romy Schmidt, Minister of National Goods and President of the Council of Ministers for Territorial Information in Chile, for the inauguration of UNSDI Global Partners Meeting.

Dr. **Volker Liebig**, Director of Earth Observation Programme – European Space Agency.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good morning.

In first place, I would like to express my gratefulness to Mr. Jelle Hielkema because of his special invitation to participate of this meeting. It is very important for us to be standing here today, since in Chile we are beginning a process oriented to strengthen and spread our Spatial Data Infrastructure, that we denominate National System of Coordination of Territorial Information (SNIT). This initiative is absolutely supported by the President of the Republic, Ms. Michelle Bachelet.

One of the principal reasons that summon us today is the restlessness because our countries can collaborate and cooperate actively so that the United Nations counts on a Spatial Data Infrastructure supplying the information necessary to face in an efficient form a set of fundamental issues related with the well-being of the humanity in all its fronts: the respect to the human rights, the protection of the environment, the fight against diseases and the reduction of the poverty.

As you well know it, these fundamental issues were well represented in the resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations held on 18 September 2000, in the eight objectives of development of Millennium, that include from the reduction to the middle the more extreme poverty, to the halting of the propagation of the HIV/AIDS, and the attainment of universal primary education for year 2015. The objectives of development of millennium are measurable. Year after year we are evaluating advances, if we approached the goals, if we must correct the way, if the solutions are adapted to the necessities. At any moment, the governments of the countries members of this organization are making decisions, assigning resources, establishing priorities, constructing roads, schools and hospitals, forming professional able to face these challenges, to send them where they are required.

In this context, spatial data and geo-information play a very important role. We must know the territory very well and what happens in it, so that the school covers instruction requirements; so that the hospital is accessible to the patients who need

it; so that the social programs take care of poorest indeed; so that the progress does not deteriorate environment, among others. The vision from the territory allows to integrate of better form the multiple dimensions and facets of a problematic in particular.

I we want that spatial data and geo-information really serve the United Nations and to all our governments, we have to speak about spatial data infrastructures (SDI), in their different levels and scales: local, national, regional and global. In this particular occasion we will talk about spatial data infrastructure data for the United Nations (UNSDI).

In order to make guessed right decisions, to journey across the correct way, we need all the elements that comprise of a SDI: human resources in first place, expecting they are professionals enabled and with public vocation, able to transform spatial data into information and knowledge to the service of the decisions; in second place, political will from governments to maintain information of quality and accessible to the entire world, reason why we need that the State, through its authorities, supports the implementation of SDI at national level; and, in third place, technologies that allow to store, to process and to model information, that nowadays it is generated in great volumes. All the previous without forgetting the necessity to create standards to be able to integrate information and to communicate between us with greater facility.

In this point I want to reiterate you that the Government of Chile is absolutely committed with these elements. Our country is crossing a successful implementation process of “electronic government” promoting transparency and democratization of the public information.

Please, let me stop in human resources issue I previously mentioned. For the success of the United Nations Spatial Data Infrastructure, intellectual capital of our countries is essential, and I believe that it is in this point where the best possibilities of cooperation and collaboration are opened to us, constituted as the pillars of this encounter. To interchange experiences, to spread portfolio of successes, to enable us mutually, is going to allow us to approach with greater speed the goals of world-wide well-being that we have prevailed.

Also I want to emphasize the necessity of documentation for our information, mainly considering the wide territorial coverage of the actions of the United Nations. It is urgent to maintain metadata catalogues that allow us to present the world what information we have, how it has been constructed and how it is acceded to it, with the intention of facilitating its flow in this organization and improving the response times for solving the problems they summon us.

In Chile we are aware about all these requirements and our conception of SDI meets as much political aspects as technicians, who direct and regulate its operation. We have clarity that the main target of our SDI is to satisfy the

necessities of our users: the Chilean citizens, the institutions of the Chilean State and the entire world.

Nowadays we have in Chile our SNIT, "National System of Coordination of Territorial Information", created by Supreme Decree, as I will be able to tell you in a pair of hours more, which is fruit of a maintained work that we have been making in the last years, coming to materialize initiatives and to solve problems that already affected to us from the beginning of the 90', when GIS began to be used in our country and particularly in the institutions of government.

In order to finalize, I want to reiterate our gratefulness by the invitation to show our vision and experience on these matters, and we hope to be a real contribution in the work to be developed in these days; we are certain this interchange of knowledge will enrich of great way our work and the challenges that we have ahead, in search of the well-being of each one of the people in our countries.

Thanks and very good morning.