Press Briefing

Symposium on Building Capacities for Evolving Geospatial Needs in Myanmar
24-25 May 2018

Rose Garden Hotel, Yangon

Background

The last decade has brought innovative technologies which have radically changed the way in which maps are produced and used. Geospatial technologies have become a part of our everyday life – from Google Maps and Google Earth, to satellites orbiting Earth in outer space, all the way down to the mobile phone in our hand. In a short period, geospatial technologies have changed the way we gather information and improved how we plan and handle daily life.

We have become reliant on geospatial technologies in many ways – whether to get from A to B, to manage natural disasters, to improve agriculture, to plan locations needing new schools and health centres, to identify sites for telecommunications expansion, or to identify transport routes for upgrade.

Geospatial technologies – and our skills to use them – will also be critical to Myanmar's progress on its commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals. Such technologies will help identify areas in need as well as progress to ensure that all people in the country can benefit from its development.

The Myanmar Information Management Unit / MIMU

The Myanmar Information Management Unit, or MIMU, is a service of the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator's Office. It provides information management support to strengthen decision-making of humanitarian and development actors, countrywide. MIMU provides information management support including information resources, technical advice and capacity building support, working closely with the government partners, UN and NGO agencies, researchers, and others.

The MIMU Symposium

The rapid expansion of geospatial technology has brought the need for new skills to be able to understand and apply the newly available tools – not just for GIS professionals but also for engineers, urban planners, rural development specialists, conservationists and many others. Experience from other countries has shown a rapid growth in the use of of geospatial technologies in government ministries, in the private and development sectors, and in the academic sector as a source of learning and research.

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The Myanmar Information Management Unit / MIMU has organised this two-day Symposium on May 24-25 with the support of the Government of Canada. It will bring together over 120 participants to discuss the evolving use of geospatial technologies in Myanmar and how training can be best oriented to meet these needs. Participants include academics from the 27 universities across the country offering courses in the use of geospatial technologies, representatives of government departments, the private and development sectors. International experts from leading institutions from the Netherlands and Thailand will also join to share experience and approaches.

Key issues which will be explored in the Symposium:

- Can skilled geospatial workers in Myanmar meet the needs of today's academic, government, private and development sector?
- What steps should training institutions and professionals take to ensure capacity for future needs, as the geospatial field continues its evolution.

What is geospatial technology?

Geospatial technology describes the modern equipment used to visualise, measure and analyse the earth in terms of location. This usually involves GPS (global positioning systems), GIS (geographical information systems, a suite of software tools for mapping and analyzing data), Remote sensing (satellite imagery, aerial photography and geospatial data collected from drone sensors) and Internet mapping.

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Please note that media representatives are welcome to attend sections of interest, however speakers will be free only in breaks for discussion and interviews.