PROF QUAYNOR'S SPEECH ON BEHALF OF THE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY AT THE OPENING OF THE 1ST AFRICA GEOSPATIAL DATA AND INTERNET GOVERNANCE CONFERENCE IN ACCRA GHANA, 22 October 2019

INTRODUCTION

Ministers of State, Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, its a pleasure to address you on the occasion of the inaugural conference on the continent, to discuss geospatial data and internet governance. Admittedly, the future of technology will deeply entangled with geospatial data and it's usage in emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT), 5G technologies, Blockchain and several others will all depend heavily on geospatial data. To a large extent all these are made possible by the one

Internet, its openness and permission less global shared infrastructure

Geospatial data is well used in many industries including Food and nutrition, town and country planning, natural resource planning, education, health and many sectors. To shape Africa's digital economy, therefore requires paying attention to geospatial data of countries within the continent to enable Africa tunnel into the future with technology.

KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

Shaping our geospatial data to impact on the future adoption of technology requires building the different blocks that come together to create a vibrant geospatial data ecosystem. Africa is a youthful continent with a teaming youth seeking to enter the innovation space. To create a ripe

and thriving environment for use of geospatial data in development, Africa needs to put in place some key interventions as follows:

1. Collection and storage of Geospatial data

The collection, processing and storage of geospatial data must receive greater attention of governments in the region. Governments on the continent must take steps to ensure that the entire data management process is properly resourced.

2. Technical capacity development of industry players in Africa

Collecting and processing of geospatial data is technology-intensive and require a highly skilled technical workforce. Capacity building in collection, management and sciences of geodata for agencies responsible for geospatial data must be properly resourced. We must promote a culture being data driven and

evidence based in realizations. A continent with a highly skilled technocrats in geodata collection and management will be an asset in defining the future of technology in Africa.

3. National policy for sharing and use of geodata

National Spatial policy is very important in harmonizing geospatial data. A good policy defining standards to be adopted and linking of the different data repositories in a country coupled with a policy to share data within government and to open up for public use will add greatly, to the effort of ensuing that Africa's spatial data is harnessed for development.

4. Opening geospatial data by governments to promote economic development

Opening up geospatial data will provide opportunity for the public to use data for economic development. Innovation hubs are spring up across the continent and an open national geospatial data will be a good incentive for development of different applications that provide solutions to citizens. For Governments that are signed onto open government initiatives an emphasis on opening up geospatial will be the thing to do

5. Open source tools to support the development of community

For the innovation community, open source tools such as open maps present a cost-effective input into developing projects. Africa must make a conscious effort to make available more open source tools for the innovation community to

produce very cost-effective solutions and contribute to open source

6. Openness and stability of internet

Developing geospatial data services benefits a great deal from an open and stable internet that is reasonably fast and affordable. Geospatial data though varied can be demanding and agencies may look to join the emerging national research and education networks (NRENs), who have infrastructure designed for the purpose, to power their developments. There are three regional networks, Wacren, Ubuntunet Alliance and ASREN which cover Africa well. Countries should work towards continuously improving infrastructure, avoiding costly shutdowns and removing taxes on the Internet to increase value of their networks

NEED FOR MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACH IN RESOLVING CHALLENGES

The digital future of Africa requires not only geodata but also a multi-stakeholder approach to the discussion of issues around the Internet. For innovation to thrive on the internet, the Internet must remain in the form in which it is today. This requires stakeholders discussion issues of internet and those enabled by the internet. The new emerging issues such as Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things and its impact to society are best managed in multi stakeholder forums. An effective stakeholder dialogue helps address anticipated challenges that adopting technologies bring so as to address the perceived negative impact of human activities.

CONCLUSION

At this point, I congratulate the conveners of this maiden conference on geospatial data and Internet governance on the Africa continent. I hope that at the end of this conference, some decision will be taken on how geospatial data coupled with the multi-stakeholder approach in resolving challenges. This would help Africa define its digital future.

I wish you fruitful deliberations during these three days of conference.

Thank you