

[\[Home\]](#)**25th Congress of The International Federation of Surveyors**[\[Back\]](#)

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh,

Good Evening and Salam Satu Malaysia.

Yang Berhormat Dato' Sri Dr. James Dawos Mamit;

Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment,

Yang Berbahagia Datuk Dr. Abdul Rahim bin Haji Nik;

Deputy Secretary-General, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment,

Sr Mohammad Azmi Mohd Zin;

President, Association of Licensed Land Surveying Malaysia (PEJUTA),

Sr Teo Chee Hai;

President, International Federation of Surveyors,

Distinguished Guests,

Esteemmed Speakers and Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am pleased to join you today at the 25th Congress of the International Federation of Surveyors. I

know many of you have travelled thousands of miles to be here; I want to thank you for your commitment.

2. I also want to thank the global membership for giving us the opportunity to host the 37th General Assembly and silver jubilee Congress – the first to be held here in Asia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. The decision to come here is a timely one. Asia is in the middle of a period of sustained economic development; a dazzling blaze of growth that is lifting millions out of poverty. Our landscapes – once shaped by agriculture – are now home to the world's most vibrant cities. Asia is growing fast, and changing fast.

4. This energy is seductive. It is the reason so many businesses are investing in Asia; the reason that our geopolitical issues assume a global relevance. But as Asia grows, it must also anticipate the wider impacts of such explosive development.

5. Within the next twenty years, Asia is set to account for more than 40 percent of global GDP, and 60 percent of the world's middle class. As our economies grow, so too will the pressure on our land, our resources and our infrastructure. Asia, like other fast-developing regions, faces a challenge: we must deliver the advances our people need, without sacrificing the resources they depend on.

6. For us, there can be no repeat of the extractive development models of the 19th century, the destabilizing conflicts of the 20th century, or the unsustainable financial practices of the early 21st. Instead, we must chart a new course: towards secure, sustainable and equitable growth.

7. And with a growing role in an increasingly integrated global economy, Asia's development matters for all. The template established here will drive development in other parts of the world; Malaysia's economic transformation programme, for example, has been studied by a number of African nations. We have a chance to show Asia's development can be affirmative, inclusive and lasting.

8. For many Asian nations, that development is driven by centralised economic planning. Here in Malaysia, for example, our Economic Transformation Programme is a comprehensive plan to achieve developed nation status by 2020. And central to the success of such policies are information and measurement.

9. This should come as no surprise. After all, we live in an age of information. With a few taps on a smartphone's screen, we have access to huge swathes of human knowledge. Sensors embedded in bridges

send structural information wirelessly. In a world of mobile internet access, everything is measured, recorded, transmitted – and much of uploaded to YouTube for good measure.

10. New industries are inverting old assumptions, as data analysis changes everything from elections to environmental programmes. In this new age, information is currency, and comprehension – the ability to understand and interpret data – is power. Few industries escape untouched.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. The implications for my profession are clear. Politicians and governments can do more to embrace the revolution in data gathering and analysis; to use evidence-based policymaking to design programmes that work.

12. So too are the implications for you, the surveyors who produce some of the most important data of all. Spatial information is vital for policy development; it informs our approach to everything from urban planning to emergency service response. And it plays a key part in the fight against environmental degradation and runaway climate change.

13. Like other raw data, spatial information – whether from land, sea or air – must be translated into a format that policymakers can understand and use. And the technologies, the models and practices you produce provide governments with the tools to address the challenges we face – from tackling local crime hotspots to designing global public health campaigns.

14. Here in Malaysia, for example, development depends on good spatial information. Infrastructure plays a vital part in our national development plan – from the Mass Rapid Transit system that is changing the face of Kuala Lumpur to the pan-Borneo highway in East Malaysia – and is dependent upon an understanding of how space can be efficiently used to deliver economic benefit.

15. Although we have taken huge strides in poverty reduction, bringing the overall poverty rate down to 1.7 percent, we still need closer co-operation on housing and other social infrastructure, to ensure that all Malaysians have livable homes.

16. And our geography and location mean we are exposed to the impacts of tropical weather systems and a changing climate, with particular risks around flooding, landslides and storms.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

17. In these areas and more, better spatial information can lead to more effective policies, more efficient programs – and better outcomes. In an era of big data and open-source policymaking, the challenge for surveyors is to ensure that information sharing practices evolve at the right pace; that knowledge gathered is put to productive use.

18. With this in mind, we should work to improve existing information infrastructure, including spatial data infrastructure; and to implement policies to ensure that spatial data is reliable, accessible for re-use, and can be easily integrated into collaborative environments. This will ensure that it makes the fullest possible contribution to the social and economic aims to which your organisation aspires.

19. I am therefore pleased to note that the International Federation of Surveyors have responded to the need for access and secure land and property rights for all by embracing the “*Continuum of Land Rights*”, a series of innovative approaches such as the “*Social Tenure Domain Model*” developed with UN-Habitat and the Global Land Tool Network, and the recent joint declaration with the World Bank on “*Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration*”.

20. I also understand there will be a United Nations Resolution later this year to ensure the sustainability of the Global Geodetic Reference Frame. This resolution seeks to encourage enhanced global cooperation and free and open data access policies. Malaysia welcomes and supports this development.

21. As the guardians of the spatial information which is so critical to global development, I urge you to continue working to strengthen existing approaches and develop new applications as you bring new techniques to bear on old problems.

Ladies and Gentlemen

22. By way of conclusion, I would like to commend the Organising Committee, especially the Association of Authorised Land Surveyors Malaysia, for bringing the worldwide membership of the Federation together.

23. I would also like to thank the Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia, the Department of Survey and Mapping Malaysia, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and the Land Surveyors Board Malaysia, all of whom supported the Congress.

24. And once again, I would welcome all of you, especially those who have endured long travel times to be here. 2014 is Visit Malaysia Year, so I hope you find time to experience the fascinating sights and sounds of this beautiful city, and of the country that surrounds it.

And so, with the recital word “*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*”, it is my pleasure to formally open the Silver Jubilee Congress of the International Federation of Surveyors.

Thank you.

Wabillahitaufik Walhidayah Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

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