

Spatial Information Vital for Development - Najib

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KUALA LUMPUR, June 17 (Bernama) -- Spatial information is vital for policy development and plays a key part in the fights against environmental degradation and runaway climate change, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said.

He said good spatial information could lead to more effective policies, efficient programmes and better outcomes, especially taking into account Malaysia's geographical location and its exposure to various weather impacts and climate change.

"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," he said.

Speaking at the 25th Congress of the International Federation of Surveyors at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC), Tuesday, Najib noted that Malaysia's 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 benefits," he said.

Spatial information also known as geospatial data or geographic information is the data or information that identifies the geographic location of features and boundaries on Earth.

It is usually stored as coordinates and topology, could be mapped and is often accessed, manipulated or analyzed through Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Speaking further, Najib said in the era of big data and open-source policymaking, the challenge for surveyors was to ensure that information sharing practices evolve at the

right pace and that knowledge gathered was put to productive use.

Thus he said, surveyors and government should work to improve existing information infrastructure, including spatial data infrastructure, and to implement policies to ensure that spatial data was reliable, accessible for re-use and could be easily integrated into collaborative environment.

"This will ensure that it makes the fullest possible contribution to the social and economic aims to which your organisation aspires," he said.

The week-long congress, organised by the Malaysian Convention and Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) comprising a trade exhibition, technical sessions and social activities, was attended by over 3,000 global FIG members, comprising surveyors and land professionals, including 1,800 international delegates.

Themed 'Engaging the Challenges-Enhancing the Relevance', the congress provides a platform for industry players to debate and get inspired, particularly on current developments and contributions that would allow the profession to be continually armed with knowledge and best practices to respond to social, economic, technological and environmental change for a sustainable future.

Association of Licensed Land Surveyor Malaysia (Pejuta) president Mohammad Azmi Mohd Zin in his speech said surveyors had to ensure their relevance in national development, maintained an invaluable presence in the field and need to advance their influence on policy decisions and advocacy matters that impact the welfare of surveyors.

Meanwhile, FIG President Chee Hai Teo said the congress was where the industry players committed and contributed, to remain useful and relevant, to address the challenges of the times.

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