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STATEMENT
by
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at the 3rd Meeting of ECO Geomatics Committee

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By Zoom Videoconferencing

Honourable Dr. Ali Javidaneh, acting director general of National Cartographic Center of IIR

Dear Chairman,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am privileged to welcome you at 3rd Meeting of ECO Geomatics Committee. At the outset, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly to the National Cartographic Center of Iran for hosting this important event. And, allow me also to extend my gratitude to all participants from the ECO Member States for their continued dedication to make possible in exploring regional cooperation opportunities in the field of geomatics.

In its third decade of regional collaboration ECO has been exploring new areas of cooperation, and as a crucial, cross-cutting segment, the surveying and mapping represented one of these new platforms. Indeed the effective integration of collection, analysis, and interpretation of data relating to the earth's surface, with existing statistics and ground-based information, will be the key to delivering timely data needed for governments, businesses, communities and citizens to make evidenced-based decisions.

As you well aware that this framework has been established with the initiative of our esteemed member state – Iran with purpose of enhancing capacity building of experts, exchange of best experiences and discovering possible cooperation in the region. So far 2 meetings of committee had been held and the series of capacity building programmes organized as a follow up of the decisions concluded by the previous committee meetings.

After shock of pandemics that globally has grappled with its implications, last year we could not be able to conduct meetings. Instead it is pleased to note that this year we have managed to reinvigorate our activities and successfully conducted two training courses – on may 2021 by the Iranian National Cartographic Center on the theme of Global Navigation Network Systems and Data Processing, as well as just recently, in September, Survey of Pakistan conducted training course for ECO member states on Spatial Data Infrastructure.

Having tasked by member states, the ECO Secretariat steer the tendencies happened in the ECO region, along with the relevant themes of global drivers, we are facilitating, promoting, coordinating and contributing to reach the goals put by our member states. The fast track of digitalization, challenges on climate change, interdependency on cross-border issues, as well as development policies each of member state stipulate the geospatial profession the need to continually evolve to respond to global challenges, social impacts and the rapid evolution of technology.

The challenges ahead inter-linked national as well as global level, so what may unite us is to cooperate in addressing a major global driver for ECO is the ‘2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’.

Key global challenges include climate change, natural and other disasters, urbanization and food and water insecurity.

COVID-19 restrictions since 2020 have impacted the way of working, space requirements and consumer demand. There is also a rising demand for geospatial information and more rapid adoption of technology. Global construction will be critical in the economic recovery, and spatial planning and development, cadastre and land management, valuation and the management of real estate, hydrography, engineering surveys, and construction economics and management will all play an important role. This will not be possible without effective positioning and measurement and spatial information management, underpinned by professional standards and practice and professional education.

Looking ahead to a post-COVID world, the key technological drivers are likely to include smart cities, Building information modeling BIM, digital twins, autonomous surveying techniques, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning and big data, blockchain, augmented reality, automated feature extraction and change detection. While these are

having a big impact in the global scale, they also can be further discovered to be driving advancement in the ECO region's future geomatics landscape.

By this so far, dear Member States, may evaluate latest developments in national scale with impact to regional and global trends and by proposing to explore any regional cooperation directions, as well as reveal their interests and needs further to pave a way for tangible steps. We call for more active engagement from other Member States to address challenges and opportunities that they encounter for using this regional platform.

Particularly, I would like to bring to your attention the opportunities introduced for our Member States for the realization of the projects. My colleague Ms. Bayan Adilbekova will illustrate a brief but useful presentation on the guidelines of our project realization capacity for our member states so that you may consider in collaborating for project realization through ECO platform which also can contribute to regional projects in financial terms.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Meanwhile, we are convinced that the new Secretary of the ECO Geomatics Committee, to be appointed by this meeting today will also play his constructive role in pursuing the regional agenda for cooperation in the field of surveying and mapping with close collaboration of the Member States and the ECO Secretariat.

In conclusion, I would like to express my firm belief that today's Meeting would further review new and ongoing proposals for regional cooperation among ECO Member States in the field of geomatics, as well as the ways and means of promoting the relevant partnerships. We count on your active engagement and fruitful brainstorming, which should inevitably contribute to the overall success of our meeting. I also hope that the proceedings of this Meeting will generate key outcome recommendations for future course of actions and implementation process. ECO Secretariat will exert its efforts to follow up the implementation of the outcome of this meeting, and lay the proper ground for enhancement of our regional cooperation in the field of geomatics.

Thank you.