

**Remarks for the Hon. Minister Robert Montague  
for the Jamaica GIS User Conference  
and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of LICJ  
on October 10, 2017**

**Please check against delivery**

Salutations

I wish to congratulate the Land Information Council of Jamaica, LICJ, on its 25th anniversary. This is indeed an important milestone and a great achievement. No one individual can take the credit. It is a celebration for all those who were there in the beginning, those who have become a part of the team throughout the years and those who continue to hold the reins today. If this was a marriage we were celebrating, it would be a silver anniversary. Many couples on their 25th anniversary will go and renew their vows and reaffirm their commitment to each other.

I believe that today is a good day to reaffirm the commitment of the Ministry of National Security and the Government of Jamaica to working alongside the LICJ; to ensure that through the use of Geo Spatial technologies, we can and we will make Jamaica a safer and more secure nation.

This conference under the theme *“Geospatial Technologies- National Security and Public Safety for All”* is of critical importance as the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Geo Spatial technologies in today’s environment is as necessary as breathing air. The access to and the use of information can be derived quicker, easier and many times more accurate with these technologies

Security and Safety are key factors which are addressed in the Sustainable Development Goals, Vision 2030 National Development Plan and are also key components in the Ministry’s 5-Pillar Crime Strategy which is the cornerstone to achieving the long-term goal of reducing crime and realising citizen safety and security.

Geospatial datasets assist in crime fighting by determining communication routes by land, sea and air as well as determining population density, distribution and structure. Satellite images can also display important information about criminal activities.

By incorporating traditional law enforcement data with data such as demographics, infrastructure, and offender tracking, we can use GIS to transform information into actionable intelligence.

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GIS and Geo Spatial initiatives support business, support security and by extension facilitate growth, supporting the Government's vision of working towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Imagine when the security forces can all have central access to GIS, imagine the time it will save and the impact it will have. GIS technology is and will continue to undoubtedly transform how we operate.

This technology allows access to a wealth of information from databases, with far reaching benefits for operational, tactical and strategic planning. Response time is important in numerous critical areas of society and the key to effective response is the availability of accurate and current data about the location of entities.

Mapping crime hot spots, vehicle navigation and tracking and identifying socio-economic patterns speak to the diversity in the nature and importance of GIS technology to all areas of development.

The Ministry is pleased to highlight several initiatives which are aimed at creating a more modern police force integrating the use of geo spatial data and GIS.

For example we are far advanced in the development of Mobile apps built utilising a GIS platform, some of which are being used by the police.

Jampolstat is one such mobile application which overlays crime statistics on a GIS map, integrating these with other socio-economic and critical infrastructure data, which will help with research and predictive and preventive policing, similar to what is currently used by the New York Police, and other Police Departments in developed nations.

Other applications being developed include the E-Policing App which will allow police personnel in the field to take reports, fill out forms, and will replace the outdated station diary log book, thereby fulfilling the intent of the Effective Policing pillar.

Other initiatives which utilize spatial technology include the Stay Alert App which allows users to report crimes to the police and provides persons with an instant helpline if they find themselves in danger. The app uses the phone's geo-locator to assist anyone who presses the panic button. These are now being used by the security forces to support crime fighting efforts. The Ministry is moving with considerable effort to expand the capabilities of the Stay Alert app.

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This is part of the Ministry's effort to promote innovation and creativity amongst our members.

We have also worked with the National Spatial Data Management Division (NSDMD) to upgrade the Jamaica Crime Observatory where locations of reported criminal offences were mapped; heat maps of these incidents were created and a database established to automate the assigning of spatial reference to future incident. This in turn will help us to formulate effective policies and programmes to address occurrences.

The Ministry has recently acquired several unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) to aid in surveillance of our expansive borders, and I assure the Jamaican public that we will be using the spatial data derived from these systems to the fullest extent.

There is no doubt ladies and gentlemen as you can see from the examples provided that GIS is a powerful tool. It allows us to display database information on a map. This ability to visualize information allows for quick analysis, to identify problems, respond to them efficiently, and develop appropriate strategies around crime prevention and community safety. GIS can be therefore be used by our security forces, policy makers, planners and managers to make more informed decisions.

Over the last decade, mapping internationally and locally has literally moved into another dimension. The importance of mapping our development as a nation cannot be overemphasized. It is a tool that will assist us in achieving many of the goals and objectives.

In order for these objectives to be realized it is important that the private sector and the Government continue to work closely together. Key partnerships between public and private sector will enable an increase in the availability of spatial data. This spatial data is essential for security, for planning and for making strategic decisions.

Let us continue to map and shape the future of Jamaica together.

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