

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY PROF KIVUTHA KIBWANA – AG. MINISTER FOR LANDS, ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIFTH KENYA NATIONAL SPATIAL DATA INFRASTRUCTURE (KNSDI) WORKSHOP AT THE SILVER SPRINGS HOTEL ON 14TH MARCH, 2006.

The permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands

The Director of Surveys

The Deputy Resident Representative, JICA Kenya Office

Members of the Workshop Organising Committee

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen



I am pleased to be with you all on this occasion of the fifth Kenya National Spatial Data Infrastructure workshop (KNSDI). I am aware that the KNSDI initiative is now five years old and that the geo-information community in Kenya has already held four previous KNSDI workshops. I am also aware that several major geo-information projects and activities have been carried out by public agencies, research institutions, and non-governmental and international organisations. In this regard I would like to mention the initiatives by Africover, the Global Map and the Africa Reference Frame (AFREF). Locally, the Kenya Reference Frame (KREF) and the digital map of the City of Nairobi were launched last year. These are examples of global, regional and local initiatives in which the local geo-information community has participated fully and which aim to provide the much-needed geo-spatial information to decision makers and other users of geo-information products and services.

Spatial data infrastructures, like all other infrastructures, are critical to the economic development of any country. It is for this reason that the Kenya government has incorporated KNSDI in its current National Development Plan 2005-2008. The NSDI, being a soft infrastructure, has the potential to develop much faster and, once developed, will stay in place much longer than hard infrastructure like roads and railways.

The theme for today's workshop, "Implementing the KNSDI for sustainable development" is especially relevant in the Kenya's context. The twin national challenges of sustained economic growth and poverty alleviation demand that accurate, up to date and complete geographical information is available when and where it is required for decision making. The lack of policy guidelines, partnerships and standards for the acquisition, integration, security, use, transmission and exchange of geo-spatial data has resulted in organisations, projects and individual users of such data spending huge resources searching or collecting information that already exists. Spatial data infrastructures encourage the use of existing information by multiple users and easy access to information from multiple sources thereby reducing losses in duplicated costs. Such infrastructures can change the way our geo-spatial data is collected, maintained, shared and used. They will require that appropriate policy is formulated to



promote access, sharing and dissemination of geographic information. They will also require that we continuously enhance our human and technical capacity to maintain them. I have noticed with interest that this workshop will deliberate on the formulation of the draft KNSDI Policy, which will be the guidelines for the implementation of the KNSDI initiative. Looking at the rest of the workshop

programme, I am confident that this workshop will address these issues and come up with recommendations for the way forward.

While the public sector has the responsibility to lead in the infrastructure development efforts, the private sector, the civil society and other development partners have a clear role to play in such efforts. I am glad to note that all these stakeholder communities have been involved in the Kenya NSDI initiatives and are present here today.

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, let me take this opportunity to thank Survey of Kenya, JICA Kenya Office and the KNSDI Secretariat for organising this workshop. I wish all of you fruitful deliberations. With those few remarks, it is now my pleasure to declare this workshop officially open.

Thank you.