

Welcome Address by Dr Diane A Dumashie, FIG President
AfricaGIS 2025 and UN GGIM: Africa XI Joint Conference- (17th November 2025)
Harnessing Geospatial Intelligence for Africa's Sustainable and Resilient Future

Good morning, and Thank you **Andre Nonguierma Head of UNECA**, for reaching out to me to join you All.

As the President of the global organisation of the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) It is an immense privilege to address you all today at the opening of the **AfricaGIS 2025 and UN GGIM: Africa XI Joint Conference**,

My greetings to **Honorable Alhaji Yuslf Sulemana- Minister of Ghana Land, Housing etc.** I wish to extend my further greetings to

- **My Clinton Heinman**, (acting) Head of South Africa DG's.....
- **Mr Samuel Kobina Annim**, Director African Centre for Statistics UNECA, and
- the **honorable Dr Tidiane Ouattara**, AU African Space Agency, and from the
- International Organizing Committee, **Mr Sives Govender**, and
- last but not least, **Surv Dr Samuel Larbi Darko, LISAG President and LOC chair and LISAG as a FIG Member**, appreciating your significant contributions to the community

Dear Distinguished Guests, Esteemed Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocols duly observed. It is my great pleasure to extend warm greetings as we gather to reflect on the significant advancements of UN-GGIM Africa, the power of geospatial intelligence, and the cutting-edge technologies shaping our world.

Our dialogue takes place within the framework of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development—an ambitious, transformative plan rooted in human rights. This agenda challenges us to think creatively and critically, inspiring the FIG global community to address today's pressing development needs.

The International Federation of Surveyors, representing professionals from more than 120 countries, has since 1878 been at the forefront of managing land, sea, and built environments. By uniting experts across disciplines, FIG tackles global challenges—climate change, sustainable development, and rapid urbanisation—while fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and professional growth.

As a UN-recognised NGO, our partnerships with UN agencies truly amplifies our impact. A key partner is UN-GGIM and its regional committees. Through the Geospatial Network, FIG contributes to frameworks such as the **IGIF** Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, the **GSGF** Global Statistical Geospatial Framework, and the **FELA**, Framework for Effective Land Administration. Our work in subcommittees and WG's, geodesy, land administration, cartography, and marine management contributes to the UN-GGIM's objectives.

This joint AfricaGIS 2025 and UN-GGIM Africa Conference is impressive in scope and vision. I commend the organisers for curating such a timely programme under the theme: *"Harnessing Geospatial Intelligence for Africa's Sustainable and Resilient Future."*

As we confront planetary challenges—climate change, urbanisation, resource management, and climate-induced disasters—the role of geospatial intelligence has never been more critical. Throughout this week, we will discuss how better, and in the African context, geospatial

technologies and GIS are advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, supporting smart cities, guiding urban planning, strengthening disaster response, and safeguarding our environment. And much more. Together, let us harness these tools to build a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive future for Africa and the world.

Notably, our deliberations are framed by the 2025 UN-Habitat SDG Report, which revealed sobering statistics: only 35% of targets are on track nearly half are progressing too slowly, and 18% are regressing.

In response, the UN has called for ambitious action in six critical areas—one of which is **digital transformation**.

In this context, geospatial intelligence has undergone exponential growth. From satellite imagery and remote sensing to GIS and advanced analytics, You as well as the survey and geospatial profession I represent, has embraced innovation, expanded access to data, and integrated artificial intelligence and machine learning into our processes. These advances are transforming the way societies operate, enabling smarter decisions and more resilient communities.

Our collective expertise across the geospatial information data ecosystem is vital. It underpins informed policymaking, effective implementation, and the creation of sustainable futures. This will be explored in depth and already started at the Member country, two-day IGIF workshop and during subsequent sessions.

Yesterday I heard the renewed commitment of UN-GGIM Africa member countries to advancing geospatial information and fostering a culture of innovation, this is inspiring. The work being discussed here *to harness geospatial intelligence for Africa's sustainable and resilient future* will not only strengthen governments but also energize the global surveying and geospatial community. It underscores the need for continued investment in skills, research, and development.

Africa holds a pivotal role in shaping a resilient global future. Anchored in the UN's 2030 Agenda and Africa's Agenda 2063. Our present actions must be steadfast, and our vision must extend beyond current goals to ensure lasting resilience and relevance

Dear UN-GGIM Africa members, I welcome your outreach to partners such as the FIG community. The FIG mission—***Surveyors serving society for the benefit of people and planet***—aligns perfectly with the purpose of this conference. Yet, above all, **success depends on partnerships**. Only by working together can we truly harness expertise for the global sustainability agenda.

On this note, allow me to warmly invite you to the FIG Congress 2026, to be held in Cape Town, South Africa, from 24–29 May 2026. With the theme ***“The Future We Want: The SDGs and Beyond”***, the Congress will extend these discussions and showcase our collective commitment to sustainability, resilience, and inclusive development- all predicated upon digital transformation.

As we embark on this week's discussions, let us share knowledge, exchange ideas, and forge new partnerships. I am confident that the program ahead will generate insights and connections that will continue to innovate what is possible —and ensure that we leave no one behind.

Finally, I extend my deepest gratitude to the organisers of AfricaGis and UN-GGIM Africa for convening this joint event.

Thank you, and I wish you all a successful and inspiring workshop and conference.

Ddd - END- November 2025.