

Bhutan GIS User Conference: GIS for Cross National Happiness



GIS conference for Cross National happiness was organized in the beautiful Land of the Thunder Dragon where the best of traditional culture thrives and the latest global developments are enthusiastically embraced. The National Land Commission (NLC) Bhutan organised a 2 day Bhutan GIS user conference from 25-26 November 2013 at Thimphu, Bhutan in collaboration with Esri Inc., USA and Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). The conference was attended by almost 100 scientists and delegates across Bhutan from various departments of the Bhutan government and this was the first-of-its-kind Bhutan User Conference that helped promoting GIS awareness and encouraged strategic GIS-related collaborations for dealing with regional issues.

The conference was opened by the DASHO Sangay Khandu, Honorable Secretary of National Land Commission of Bhutan who spoke on online GIS interface as a medium for dissemination and access of data and information. Giving the Inaugural Address, Honorable Lyonpo Yeshey Dorji of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forest (MoAF) emphasized the significance of GIS as an enabling technology for planned and sustainable development of any Nation. This was followed by Keynote Addresses by Mr. Rajesh Mathur, Vice Chairman, NIIT GIS Ltd who spoke on building of Bhutan GIS and Mr. Basantha Shrestha, ICIMOD stressed the use of GIS and related technologies for improving environment management and climate resilience in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region.

The two day conference had a series of presentations from the Local departments, ICIMOD, Esri and SERVIR. Mrs. Seema Joshi from Esri India showcased "ArcGIS Platform", how ArcGIS Online would help in building up Bhutan GIS. In another joint presentation entitled "From Space...and Village to Space," NASA SERVIR Project Director Daniel Irwin, NASA Applied Sciences Capacity Building



Program manager Nancy Searby, and USAID Global Climate Change Team Director Bill Breed discussed connecting space technology to on-the-ground environmental challenges through SERVIR.

The Bhutan GIS User Conference ended with hope that the event helped the scientist and delegates that it kept them abreast with the latest trends and technology advancement in the field of GIS, and expressed interest in making this conference a regular event ●

