

**Opening Speech
for
The 19th United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference
for Asia and the Pacific**

by

H.E. Group Captain Anudith Nakornthap
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at

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Distinguished Delegates and Observers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology of Thailand, and the Kingdom of Thailand, I would like to welcome you to this 19th session of the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific (UNRCC-AP). I also extend to you a very warm welcome to Bangkok and to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region.

As many of you will be aware, the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific was established by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1954 to stimulate surveying and mapping of Member States' territories. Since then, UNRCC has been convened every three years in the Asia-Pacific region. In fact, this is the third consecutive UNRCC-AP to be hosted by ESCAP in Bangkok, so I think you must enjoy coming here.

/ These Conferences constitute ...

These Conferences constitute an important regional mechanism for the exchange of information and knowledge among national mapping and surveying authorities, and the international scientific organizations active in geospatial information and related technologies. With advances in information and communication technologies driving innovation, the creation of new businesses and catering to an increasing base of users, the geospatial information community is facing some crucial challenges: how to harness the enormous potential of geospatial technologies and go beyond local and national level applications to regional and global applications, and how to achieve an integrated management and dissemination of geospatial information in support of social, economic and environmentally sustainable development. This rapidly evolving IT-environment poses challenges, but also offers opportunities for geospatial community to address.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In Thailand, we recognize the increasing important of Geospatial Information Management for sustainable economic and social growth. We put an emphasis on both policy and operational level. At policy level, the National Geo-Information Committee has

/ endorsed the first Thailand ...

endorsed the first Thailand Geo-Information Master Plan in June and its implementation is pending the cabinet's approval. The vision of the Plan is to create a knowledge-based society using Geo-Information as a driving tool. Thai people would be able to access and utilize Geo-Information for personal enrichment and sustainable development. Other national GIS development this year is the establishment of Thai National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) to support the exchange, sharing and usage of data across all levels of government, private organizations and academia.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT), following the best practice from other United Nations member states, is in the process of setting up the Civil Mapping Authority. This institutional arrangement takes some time because it is dealt with several regulatory rules. In the meantime, we are working closely with other stakeholders for the continued development of geospatial information management locally and globally.

At the operational level, several GIS-based services have been established especially in the areas of national disasters and environmental management. In addition, various Geo-Information

/ applications have been ...

applications have been implemented for provincial administration to effectively monitor budget allocation and to assist authority in making a policy decision.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

With the capability and talents of experienced participants in this conference, I strongly believe that we should be able to come up with creative ideas, suggestions and action plans that are suitable for development of GIS. I am certain this conference will be success, as we have so much to share and learn.

Let me now on behalf of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology officially open the 19th session of the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific. I wish you all a most pleasant stay in Thailand and I am looking forward to welcoming you all again in the future.

Thank you.
