

AfricaGEO 2014: Inspiring Geomatics Meeting Place



The AfricaGEO Conference, held in Cape Town, South Africa, from 1 to 3 July 2014, was a successful and inspiring geomatics event. Over 610 delegates from 28 countries attended the function, which featured 180 exhibitors and saw over 90 papers being presented. The participation in the presentations and the interaction amongst delegates was considerable, and often led to some interesting and thought-provoking debates.

The opening plenary session kicked off with a welcome from deputy minister of Rural Development and Land Reform, Mr Mcebisi Skwatsha, as well as presentations by keynote speakers Mr Cyprian Selebalo from UN-Habitat, and Dr Chen Jun, president of the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS).

Mr Selebalo spoke about the advances of the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) and its use in securing land and property rights in developing countries, which was fitting, as the conference coincided with the re-opening of the Land Claims process. Dr Chen Jun followed with his talk on China's global land cover (GLC) mapping project, which has resulted in a comprehensive 30m resolution GLC data product – Globalland30.

Professor Chris Rizos, president of the International Association of Geodesy (IAG), spoke about how the geomatics industry can benefit from advances in GNSS and geodesy, but only by being far-sighted and embracing change and becoming experts in positioning coordinate reference systems, and geospatial data management.

Cartography

Another enlightening keynote address was by professor Georg Gartner, president of the International Cartographic Association (ICA), who spoke about modern cartography and its adaptation to modern technologies. He discussed the existing research and development in cartography and related disciplines, and how the vision of a contemporary, modern, innovative, attractive domain of cartography is now, more than ever, relevant in today's times.

Mr Jeff McKenna, president of the Open Source Geospatial Foundation (OSGeo), concluded the keynote addresses by speaking about the main players supporting the Open Source communities, including the Open Source Geospatial Foundation.

Presentations

Delegates were spoilt for choice when it came to the presentations. Aside from the plenary sessions there were parallel sessions covering surveying, geo-information science, remote sensing, education and professional matters; as well as land development, cadastre and tenure streams with speakers from South Africa and the rest of the world. On the social side, The Welcome cocktail function on the first night provided an excellent networking opportunity and the gala dinner held at District Six Homecoming Centre in Cape Town was thoroughly enjoyed by all providing an opportunity for delegates to show off their dancing skills.

AfricaGEO 2014 was organised by the various South African Geomatics Associations: SAGI, PLATO, GISSA, the Hydrographic Society of South Africa, the Institute of Mine Surveyors of South Africa and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform.

For more information on AfricaGEO 2014 - and a considerable amount of photos - go to www.africageo.org.