

Geospatial World in Hyderabad



The geospatial world gathered in Hyderabad, India, from January 18th to 21st at the Geospatial World Forum (GWF). With high-profile guests and delegates from all over the globe convening in the capital city of Andhra Pradesh, the old city of the Nizam rulers once again became a buzzing hub of geospatial business.

More than 400 speakers addressed sixty thematic sessions, and close to 2,000 delegates filled the Hyderabad International Convention Center. During the opening ceremony it was remarked that more than 80% of all data has a geographical reference, be it in field of environment, biology or health care. But the opportunities opening up ahead are also immense: 50% of the world is still unmapped, and certainly India forms one of the last

frontiers of the geospatial industry.

Optimism ruled the keynote speeches from, among others, emeritus Prof. Fraser Taylor from Canada, who put out a plea to 'avoid jargon' among professionals in order to forge links and integrate successfully with colleagues in other industries. Dr Shailesh Nayak, Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, pointed to the importance of spatial information in uncovering the relationship between fields.

One interesting topic he touched on was the crucial role of the oceans, and thus the importance of mapping the seabed. In his view, the oceans will provide for energy and food in coming years; neither should the influence of the seas on the environment and weather be underestimated. Dr Kasturirangan, a member of the planning commission of the Government of India, told his audience that a new paradigm for geospatial information needed to be defined. He was happy to see new applications in geo-information being used to improve life on Earth for its inhabitants.

The organisers of the GWF had succeeded in attracting guest representatives from the Indian government. The Honourable Minister of Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, Shri Kapil Sibal, joined the meeting on the first day, and the eminent guest at the Awards Nights, when numerous awardees were honoured, was Chief Minister Shri Narendra Modi from Gujarat. Modi was happy to share the fact that a new geo-technology park was to be developed in his home state, to be a cradle for Indian geo-technology. He invited the organisers of Geospatial World Forum to hold the biannual event in Gujarat in 2013.

Thematic sessions throughout the week gave delegates and speakers alike the chance to share views and discuss developments on, for instance, WebGIS, GNSS, Urban Planning and Development, Advancements and Trends in Photogrammetry, Disaster Management, Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Surveying and Cartography.

Another part of the Convention Center was the venue for a tradeshow that exhibited both the eagerness of companies from abroad to enter the Indian marketplace, and a lively domestic industry, also widely represented. Delegates had ample time to watch demonstrations and get updates on all new products.

The next GWF is scheduled for two years' time at an as yet unknown venue. But the corridors of the HICC resounded with the invitation from Minister Modi, delegates bidding each other farewell with "...see you in Gujarat?!"