

# An Overview of the 29<sup>th</sup> Asian Conference on Remote Sensing

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## 1. Background

The first Asian Conference on Remote Sensing (ACRS) was held in Bangkok, Thailand in 1980 AD and the Asian Association on Remote Sensing (AARS) was formed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> ACRS in Beijing, China in 1981 AD. Since then AARS is organizing ACRS every year in one of the Asian countries for promoting remote sensing technology through the exchange of information, mutual cooperation, international understanding and goodwill amongst the members. The 29<sup>th</sup> ACRS was held to fulfill the aim of AARS in Colombo, Sri Lanka from November 10 -14, 2008.

The 29<sup>th</sup> ACRS was attended by 494 participants from 30 countries. Out of which 220 participants were from Sri Lanka and 274 from other parts of the globe. There were 6 participants from Nepal. (Two from Ministry of Land Reform and Management and one each from Land Management Training Centre, National Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance and Institute of Engineering of Pokhara) .

## 2. Opening Ceremony

The conference was jointly inaugurated by lighting the traditional oil lamp by Mr. J.R.W. Dissanayake, Secretary, Ministry of Land and Land Development; Emeritus Prof. Shunji Murai, General Secretary, AARS; Prof. Orhan Altan, President, ISPRS and Ms. Jorien Terlouw, ITC Alumni Coordinator, The Netherlands. The opening ceremony was chaired by the Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee Mr. B.J.P. Mendis, Surveyor General, Survey Department, Sri Lanka. Most of the messages delivered by the speakers are available in the Programme Book of the Conference.

## 2.1. Keynote Speech

The following two papers were presented as keynote speeches:

- i. 3D Mapping from Space – Fact or Fiction by Prof. Armin Gruen
- ii. Monitoring of Terrestrial Scene from Space- Environmental Changes and Disaster by Prof. Haruo Sawada.

## 2.2. Exhibition:

There were 12 exhibition stalls from different organizations related with Remote Sensing, Space Technology and Geographical Information System. The exhibitors displayed their recent products and publications and demonstrated the strengths, functions and provisions of their hardware and software.

## 2.3. Technical Session:

In total 2 plenary sessions and 37 parallel sessions were conducted to present 8 and 189 technical papers respectively. Out of which the following papers were presented from Nepal:

- i. Space Science and Geomatics Education in Nepal by Krishna Raj Adhikary
- ii. Preparation of Land Use Data for Municipality using Remote Sensing and Geographical Information System Technology by Rabin K. Sharma.

Furthermore, in one of the technical sessions, the Local Organizing Committees gave opportunity to Mr. Rabin K. Sharma from Nepal to chair a session on Image Classification Innovation Problem to Solving Methodologies.

## 2.4. Poster Session:

In total 60 technical papers were presented in three poster sessions and Mr. Krishna Bhandary from Nepal presented a poster on Application of GIS Japanese Encephalitis Risk Zone Mapping Based on Socio-Cultural and Environmental Factors - A case study of Kailali, Bardiya and Banke Districts of Nepal.

## 3. National Delegates Meeting

National delegates meetings were one of the major events of AARS. The meetings were conducted on November 11 and 13, 2008. The meetings were chaired by Mr. B.J.P. Mendis, Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee. Some of the outcomes of the meeting were as follows:

- European Space Agency was awarded to be Associate Member of AARS
- In order to celebrate 30<sup>th</sup> ACRS in 2009, AARS is going to publish Geo-referenced Satellite Image of Capitals in Asia. So AARS requested member countries to provide the Geo- referenced Satellite Image of the Capital.
- The new Editor-in-Chief of Asian Journal of Geo-informatics shall be Dr. Ngugen Dinh Duong from Vietnam as the term of Prof. Bruce Froster, from Australia as an Editor-in-Chief has been terminated. This journal is one of the publications of the AARS
- Dr. Gorbachov from Russia presented a technical paper on Rice-sat Issue.
- In order to commemorate 1000 years of establishment of the city Hanoi of Vietnam, the 31<sup>st</sup> ACRS shall be organized in Vietnam in 2010 AD.
- The 30<sup>th</sup> ACRS shall be organized in Beijing, China from October 19- 23, 2009.

## 4. Reception

In honour of the participants, the Local Organizing Committee offered a welcome reception on November 10, 2008 at Hotel Galadari of Colombo. Before commencement of the dinner, a cultural programme was organized in two phases. The professional artists from Sri Lanka performed various Sri Lankan dances in the first phase of the programme which was followed by the second phase of song and dances performed by the delegates of the countries from Sri Lanka, China, China Taipei, Japan, Thailand and Nepal.

## 5. Additional Events

In conjunction with the conference the following additional events were also conducted:

- i. **AIT Workshop:** Some selected participants were invited to participate on AIT workshop to discuss on web mapping
- ii. **ERDAS Workshop:** ERDAS Workshop was conducted to provide information on the product of the ERDAS Software.
- iii. **ITC Event:** ITC, The Netherlands organized two events. The first event was ITC workshop which was organized to provide information on the various courses of ITC, The Netherlands. The second event was an interaction programme among the ITC Alumnus in presence of the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Sri Lanka followed by a reception dinner.
- iv. **White Elephant Session:** This Session was focused for the students to teach them how to write a better technical proposal and the thesis and the effective way of presenting the paper. The power point of the presentations of these techniques is given in the official web site of AARS ([www.aars-acrs.org](http://www.aars-acrs.org))
- v. **Student Session:** This session was organized to promote Post Graduate, M. Sc and Ph. D. Students of Asian countries for promoting activities of ACRS in relation to Remote Sensing and Geographical Information System.
- vi. **ISPRS Meeting:** Prof. Orhan Altan, President, ISPRS organized a special meeting to prepare a document on the concept of the activities of Remote Sensing which is to present from the Asian side in the coming Congress of ISPRS. The participants in this meeting were the representatives from the member organization of ISPRS who were present in the Conference. Mr. Rabin K. Sharma President, Nepal Remote Sensing and Photogrammetric Society (NRSPS) of Nepal also participated in the meeting as this Society is one of the member organizations of ISPRS.

## 6. Closing Ceremony

The Closing Ceremony of the 29<sup>th</sup> ACRS was held under the Chairman of Prof. Kohei Cho from Japan. Emeritus Prof. Shunji Murai, General Secretary of AARS presented the summary report of the National Delegates Meeting. He also awarded Japanese Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (JSPRS) Award to Young Scientists whose technical paper were among

the best. Accordingly, the Chairman of JSPRS Award committee, Prof. Ryutaro Tatieshi, Japan announced the 5 names from the best oral presenter and 2 from the best poster presenter.

The Coordinator of the Local Organizing Committee, Mr. D.N.D. Hettiarachchi, Deputy Surveyor General, Survey Department, Sri Lanka presented the statistics of the conference and also offered Vote of Thanks. Then the representative from China, Prof. Tong Qingxi invited all the participants to join the 30<sup>th</sup> ACRS to be held in Beijing, China in 2009. Finally, the Chairman of the Session, Prof. Kohei Cho summarized the conference and thanked all the participants and the Local Organizing Committee Members for their active roles to conclude the conference successfully and announced the completion of the conference.

## **7. Conclusion**

The conference completed with a grand success and the Secretary General, of AARS expressed his great satisfaction for the participation from more Asian Countries than the previous conferences. This is an

appropriate forum for acquiring knowledge on the recent technological developments in the field of Remote Sensing and Geographical Information System. So the Geomatics professionals from Nepal should try to participate in such events for improving the present technological systems in his/her working place and for introducing the feasible technology for the betterment of Society in Nepal.

## **Reference**

1. Programme Book of the 29<sup>th</sup> Asian Conference on Remote Sensing 2008.
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4. Report of the 29<sup>th</sup> Asian Conference on Remote Sensing, 2008.
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6. Web Site: [www.aars-acrs.org](http://www.aars-acrs.org)