

Over one hundred and sixty participants from diverse cultures and professional backgrounds drawn from 50 countries across the world descended on the scenic Kenya College of Communication and Technology (KCCT) in Nairobi.

The three day Conference dubbed 'Mapping for Change' started on 7th sept and ended on 9th. It saw the participants share views and ideas about the participatory Spatial Information Management and Communications.

Participants comprised of practitioners from research institutions and rural communities as well as NGOs workers.

Among them were the Technical center for Agricultural and Rural cooperation (CTA) Director Dr. Hansjorg Neun, Director of IIRR East Africa, Dr. Isaac Bekalo and the renowned rural development specialist, Dr. Robert Chambers. The conference was coordinated by the IIRR Africa Regional Center in Nairobi

During the meeting, participants identified key factors influencing the successful introduction of Participatory Spatial Information Management and Communications.

Key issues that emerged during the conference included Building synergies, networks and partnership to overcome disabling legal frame works.

Dave De Vera, the Executive Director of Philippine Association for Inter-Culture Development (PAFID), gave a memorable presentation on strategies required to enhance a positive and enabling environment for Participatory Spatial Information Management and Communications.

He focused extensively on the Philippine and Malaysia experiences, including how local communities have partnered with international NGOs to define gaps in land-use and tenure, and to evolve their own version of the law.

"We must proactively engage with the national Governments through partnership agreements, in order to provide a 'legal' cover to do mapping", said De Vera.

On obstacles communities encounter while setting up their own community mapping systems, Mac Chapin of the Environmental Law institute (ELI) emphasized the need to create an enabling environment for participatory social organization.

Chapin said the participatory projects are social development, community-based projects adding that they are not about technology transfer but about organizational issues that communities have to solve. "Participatory Geographical Information Systems (PGIS) projects are social developments projects with a technical component projects", he said.

Robert Chambers took the participants through the rapid growth and spread of

Taking Mapping to its Users

participatory mapping practices and their increasing application in various situations not only in natural resource management, but also in many other domains.

He noted that the current PGIS practice originally emerged from the use of sketch mapping in the 1980s to the sophisticated use of Spatial information Management Communications Technologies in use today. "It would be a mistake to kick away the ladder...it would be a mistake to think of sketch mapping as primitive compared to PGIS", said Chambers.

Albertus Pramono from Indonesia Mapping Network (JKPP) stressed the point that informed community anticipates and adapts to issues of emerging conflict more effectively making the community anticipate and adapt to issues of emerging conflict in the use of PGIS mapping more easily.

At the same time, Giacomo Rambaldi, a participant from Italy told the workshop that there was need for locals to be allowed to participate in land demarcation to avert conflicts.

He told the conference that local people, especially in marginalized areas, should be involved in developing new maps and land demarcation.

The conference seeks ways to help marginalized communities use new technologies to define boundaries. Maps are developed using the Geographic Information Systems (GPS) technologies. The method is already in use among the Ogiek community, leaving in the Mau forest. Julius Muchemi, a local participant, said involving communities would give them a chance to tell policy makers the features marking boundaries, hunting grounds and other natural resources.

With the assistance of technology intermediaries, indigenous and rural communities have over the years adopted and used diverse community mapping techniques to delineate areas such as ancestral lands and common resources, including range lands, forest areas and fishing grounds for their benefit.

The focus of the event was on sharing experiences and defining good practices for making geographic information technologies and systems available to less-favored groups.

Such practice will assist marginalized groups to assert their rights on ancestral lands and resources. It will also help communities to collectively manage shared resources like grazing areas and communal forests.



ADVENT INSURANCE BROKERS LTD

**We are proud to
be associated with**

The NGOs Voice

Major Insurance Packages we handle,

Motor; private and commercial	Burglary
Staff retirement Benefits Scheme	House hold effects
Group Life Assurance	Marine hull/cargo
Group Creditor Protection	Goods in Transit
Group Personal Accident	Public Liability/products liability
Staff Medical Insurance Scheme	Money in Transit
Aviation Insurance	Workmen compensation

As soon as you consult and instruct us to handle your insurance matters, you remain assured of the good hands in which you have entrusted your insurance portfolio and worries.

Contact us at:

Paresia Centre, Ngong Road, Opp. Uchumi Hyper,
P.O. Box 22542 - 00400, Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: 254-02-575566/77, 577104 Fax 254-02-575588
E-mail: adventib@africaonline.co.ke