

Training on Geographic Information Systems for Disaster Resilient Urban Planning for Local Authority Officers and Urban Planners



May 2014, Colombo, Sri Lanka: The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), in collaboration with the University of Moratuwa, conducted a training programme on Geographic Information Systems to facilitate Disaster Resilient Urban Planning for Urban Planners and Local Authority Officers working in the planning sectors of four Sri Lankan cities. This programme is one of the key outputs of the Project *Disaster Resilient City Development Strategies for four Cities in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka*, funded by the Government of Australia.

The five day residential training programme was held at the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA) in Colombo earlier this month. Local Authority officials, urban planners and other officers responsible for city planning from the towns of Mannar, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Akkaraipattu participated in the programme. It was designed to enhance the participants' skills and abilities in the fields of Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing (GIS/RS). It further helped to improve their understanding of the relationship between GIS and RS and their application in disaster resilient urban planning.

The training programme comprised of both theoretical and practical sessions on GIS / RS applications. Other modules included cartography using the ArcGIS software package, satellite image processing and the practical use of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and related new technology. The University of Moratuwa played a vital role in conducting the technical training sessions of the programme.

The participants found the training modules extremely useful. Commenting on the training, Mr. S. Kokularajah, Relief Officer from the National Disaster Relief Service Centre in Mullaitivu said "The GIS training was very helpful for our work, especially for disaster management and planning activities". Ms. Kavitha Jeevagan, Planning Assistant from the Urban Development Authority (UDA) of the Northern Province, stated "This training is very useful for planning officials to understand the significance of GIS / RS and its application in urban development planning."



The *Disaster Resilient City Development Strategies for Four Cities in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka* project is being implemented by UN-Habitat in collaboration with the UDA, Ministry of Disaster Management, University of Moratuwa and the Local Authorities of Mannar, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Akkaraipattu.