RCMRD NEWS

FROM THE DG'S DESK

It is with pleasure that I welcome you to the fourth edition of our e-Newsletter. This edition highlights news items and updates on different projects, services and training events that we view as success stories. This year we launched our new Strategic Plan that will be guiding us during the period 2015 – 2018, having been approved by our Council of Ministers in their meeting held in November, 2014. We also launched our 2015 Annual Work Plan based on the new Strategic Plan. The Work Plan provides a mechanism for result based performance management. It also sets out the roles of collaborating partners and provides a framework for monitoring and evaluation, critical in the successful implementation of the new Strategic Plan.

We report on the good progress being made in an ambitious training and assessment programme for the Ethiopia Ministry of Urban Development, Housing and Construction in which 4,800 staff of the Ministry are to be trained in land and land related fields. Also, we highlight our support to Malawi through the provision of satellite data to support relief workers during the devastating floods in January. Other activities include our involvement in the Monitoring of Environment and Security in Africa (MESA), Africa Land Policy initiative and various capacity development programmes held at the Centre.

Please mention this e-Newsletter as a source of information in your communication. Also, you can access additional information from our website (www.rcmrd.org) or supplementary resources.

Dr. Hussein O. Farah

Wishing you a happy reading...

Launch of the 2015 RCMRD Work Plan

RCMRD staff during the Work Plan launch

The Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) launched its 2015 Work Plan in a ceremony held at the Centre. The 2015 Work Plan was officially launched by Dr. Hussein Farah, Director General, on behalf of the management and in the presence of all staff.

The 2015 Work Plan is the first annual plan for the implementation of the Centre's new four year Strategic Plan 2015-2018 that was approved by the Conference of Ministers in November 2014.

The Strategic Plan was developed in the context of national, regional and international environments and development initiatives, to position RCMRD to practically respond to the opportunities it presents.

The Work Plan gives details of the activities that will be carried out by the Centre in 2015.

These activities include training and capacity building, project and advisory services, data provision, repair of surveying equipment, and research.

These activities are expected to contribute to interventions aimed at dealing with the development challenges facing the Centre's member States.

RCMRD Appoints a New Remote Sensing Officer

Mr. Degelo Sendabo joined the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) as the Remote Sensing Officer. The Remote Sensing Officer position was filled during last year's RCMRD Conference of Ministers & Governing Council Meetings in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, after a thorough recruitment process.

Welcome to RCMRD Mr. Degelo Sendabo. Read more *here*

Mr. Degelo Sendabo at RCMRD's reception

MESA Technical Experts Visit RCMRD

Technical Experts from the Monitoring for Environment and Security in Africa (MESA) visited the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD).The Technical Experts were received by Dr. Hussein Farah, Director General of RCMRD, on behalf of the management of the Centre.

The Director General held a brief meeting with the Experts at the Centre's boardroom, where he gave a brief presentation on RCMRD's History, Member Countries,Vision, Mission and Services.

Thereafter, the group went to a number of project rooms including the SERVIR room, Green House Gas Inventory Project room, Data office, AMESD/MESA Project room, Remote Sensing Laboratory, among others.

The MESA Technical Experts visit to RCMRD was in line with the ongoing 4th MESA Technical Experts Meeting, which started on the 19th of January, 2015.

RCMRD Helping Malawi Respond to Ongoing Floods

The Regional Center for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) hosting the SERVIR East & Southern Africa hub, partnered with NASA to help the government of Malawi respond to the flood situation.

The Department of Surveys in Malawi together with the Department of Disaster Management (DoDMA) requested RCMRD to help them access satellite imagery and analysis to assess damage and plan response, including evacuation.

The SERVIR Interactive Mapper, https://www.servir-global.net/Himalaya/mapsdata/interactivemapper.aspx, provided access to critical information in near-real-time from the Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission (TRMM) regarding the progression of rainfall. Read more *here*

RCMRD's Partnership with the UNSPIDER as a Regional Support Office

The Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RC-MRD) has been at the forefront of promoting the use of geospatial technologies for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in Africa.

RCMRD in collaboration with NASA SERVIR has developed a comprehensive DRR framework which stipulates the principles and rationale of the center's engagement in the region in disaster management including the procedures for identifying projects to implement in the member states and strategic partnerships with development partners and collaborators working in the region.

Amongst many of these partneships is RCMRD's role as a UNSPIDER Regional Support Office (RSO). This partnership has been operational for several years now and among the activities jointly implemented under the partnership is capacity building for experts in institutions in member states who are involved in different aspects of disaster management including early warning, response, mitigation as well as capacity building to experts at RCMRD involved in disaster management projects through participation in international conferences and training workshops. Read more *here*

RCMRD Involved in the Urban Land Development and Management Support Operation in Ethiopia

The Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) is currently involved in an ambitious project for Assessment and Training on Land and Land Related Fields for 4,800 employees of the Ministry of Urban Development, Housing and Construction (MUHCo), the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

The Assessment and Training is being carried out in four centers including; Bahir Dar, Hawassa, Adigrat and Ambo.

RCMRD's Dr. Rwiza (the Project Manager) hosted a dinner for the local and international assessors in Ambo in honor of the ongoing activity.

The project is anticipated to be completely implemented in two

Local and International assessors during the dinner

phases and within nine months, starting from July 2014.

RCMRD is devoted to providing highly competent professionals and creating knowledge and skill transfer to its clients.

RCMRD SERVIR-Eastern and Southern Africa Project Involved in Capacity Development in the Member States

SERVIR-Eastern and Southern Africa has been involved in a number of Training and Capacity Building activities in various African states and within the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) member states.

The objective behind SERVIR's active capacity building is tostrengthen the ability of Governments and other key stakeholders to integrate Earth observation information and geospatial technologies into development decision making.

SERVIR-Eastern and Southern Africa's capacity building projects are targeted towards experts in GIS and remote sensing and people in this field within RCMRD member states.

Government officials along with representative institutions within the industry are invited to participate in workshops associated with the projects. These fora are created to encourage knowledge sharing and create common ground for various countries to exchange experiences and challenges they may be facing. Read more *here*

Data Dissemination and Technical Training in Malawi

The Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) through the point of contact, Mr. Ben Yassin from the Environmental Affairs Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining, Malawi, organized a two-day training and one-day data dissemination from 9th to 11th February, 2015, in Lilongwe.

The main objective of the two-day training and single-day data dissemination was to enlighten the participants of the methodology used in developing land cover maps.

RCMRD has been dedicated to sharing the relevant data using all available means developed for Malawi through the "Land Cover Mapping for GHG project".

Group photo of participants

Also, RCMRD has created various avenues for access using both online and offline resources.

They include interactive DvDs that contain open source software for the visualization of developed land cover maps, technical reports, training manuals, accuracy reports, and Landsat Imagery used in mapping. Read more *here*

Project Launch on Implementing the AU Declaration on Land

A delegation from the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) led by Dr. Katetegeilwe Rwiza, Director of Land Surveys and Management Department attended the Land Policy Initiative (LPI) Project Launch in Djibouti, Djibouti on February 16th, 2015.

This was as part of the LPI being implemented by RCMRD on behalf of United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

The launch of the project in Djibouti, provided an opportunity of popularizing the project to senior officials of the IGAD SADAC Secretariat and Member States in implementing the AU Declaration on Land.

Participants listening to presentations

RCMRD is implementing the LPI activities in its Member States.

The First MESA IGAD THEMA Regional Steering Committee Meeting

Dr. Hussein Farah, the Director General of the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD)represented the Centre at the first MESA (Monitoring for Environment and Security in Africa) IGAD(Intergovernmental Authority on Development) THEMA Regional Steering Committee Meeting held from the 26th to 27th February, 2015 at The Boma Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya.

The meeting was attended by representatives of partner institutions. The Monitoring for Environment and Security in Africa Project is a three-year project which started in 2014.

Dr. Farah explained the important role of RCMRD in this Project, which is implementing land degradation assessment, natural habitat conservation, and forest monitoring

in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development region including Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, Eritrea, Burundi, and Rwanda.

Group photo of Regional Steering Committee members

Regional Workshop on Satellite Based Water Quality Monitoring for Lakes

The first Regional Workshop on Satellite Based Water Quality Monitoring for Lakes (Victoria/Malawi) begun at the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development on the 9th of March, 2015.

The Workshop was officially opened by Dr. Hussein Farah, the Director General of the Centre, and was attended by stakeholders from Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya.

Group photo of the particpants

The workshop aimed at engaging regional partners involved in different thematic areas that affect water quality, and can be monitored by data from satellites.

MESA SADC Visibility Workshop at the University of Zimbabwe

The Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development attended the MESA (Monitoring for Environment and Security in Africa) SADC (Southern African Development Community) Visibility Workshop at the University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.

The Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development is implementing Land Degradation Service in the IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) region through the MESA project.

During the workshop, experts from the Centre presented methodology and products generated using the Land degradation model.

The overall objective of the service is to guide policy and decision makers to understand the trend of land degradation and concentrate efforts on areas worst at risk.

RCMRD Staff and Management Support Malawi Floods Victims

Massive flooding occurred in Malawi in the month of January, 2015, the most serious flooding disaster in the Nation's history. The Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development and its staff contributed Ksh. 200,000 an equivalent of USD 2,500 towards the effort.

Mr. Muya Kamamia represented the Staff and Management of the Centre during the event and presented the cheque to the Malawi High Commissioner, H.E. Brig. Gen. Marcel R.D. Chirwa (Rtd).

The fundraising was under the theme 'Ndifeamodzi', meaning 'We are One'.

Mr. Muya Kamamia presenting the cheque to the Malawi High Commissioner

People look on after experiencing the most serious flooding disaster in the history of the country.

Pictorials

RCMRD Attends the Asia Geospatial Forum

Dr. Hussein Farah, the Director General of Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) represented the Centre at the Disaster, Management and Spatial Data Infrastructure forum in the South Asia Geospatial Forum held in Hyderabad, India from 9th to 12th of February 2015. Read more *here*

Training on Current and Recent Advancements in GIS Software Solutions in Dubai

A group of Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) staff including Vincent Mtaroni, Eunice Wangui, Abdallah Siro and Anastasia Wahome were in Dubai, courtesy of Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) for a training on current and recent advancements in ESRI's GIS software solutions beginning the 16th of February to the 19th of February, 2015. Read more *here*

RCMRD Participates in the First Lady's Half Marathon

The Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development's Management, as part of Corporate Social Responsibility Outreach, sponsored ten members of staff to participate in this year's First Lady's Half Marathon on Sunday – 8th March, 2015, with the aim of raising funds for the Beyond Zero Campaign. Read more *here*