



## UNIVERSITY NETWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN INDIAN OCEAN RIM (UN4DRR)

### INAUGURATION OF NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART GEOSPATIAL LAB AT THE MALDIVES NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

The new Geospatial Lab established at the Maldives National University (MNU) with the support from European Union under the UN4DRR project was inaugurated on 29th January 2023 by Dr Mohamed Shareef, the Vice Chancellor of the university. The event was held to coincide with the project Technical Training in the Maldives and was attended by delegates from both European and Asian partner universities.

During the inauguration, the Vice Chancellor extended a warm welcome to the partner university delegates to the Maldives. He highlighted the importance of such a project to the Maldives, a country vulnerable to natural disasters and with limited technical and subject-specific expertise in disaster risk reduction and management. He expressed his gratitude to the project for bringing the first disaster management course and related resources including the newly developed state-of-the-art Geospatial Lab to the Maldives and MNU. He thanked the project partners for providing



Vice Chancellor of MNU Dr. Mohamed Shareef inaugurates the Geospatial Lab

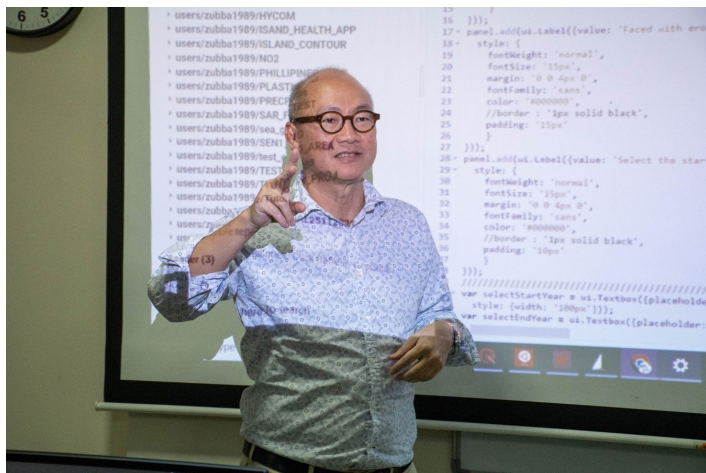
MNU staff with modern professional development and training for the successful delivery of the new Masters in Geospatial Technologies for Disaster Management degree and innovative technologies that will help shape the nation's disaster management policies.



Participants of the Technical training with the Vice Chancellor and Faculty Dean.

Project lead Professor Jonathan Chan from Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium also spoke at the event. He expressed his contentment on the establishment of the new geospatial lab that will provide the necessary infrastructure and support to remote sensing and GIS training and research. He also thanked the relevant parties stating that to build a lab from scratch needs the support of the administration and efforts of academic staff and the project team of MNU. He sincerely hopes that the lab serves as a motivation for future education and research in the area.

## UN4DRR MONITORING VISIT AND TECHNICAL TRAINING IN THE MALDIVES



Project lead, Professor Jonathan Chan addressing the participants of the training.

The final technical training and monitoring visit of UN4DRR project was held in the Maldives from 29th January to 02nd February 2023. The initial session hosted at MNU, Male' commenced with the inauguration of the new Geospatial Lab. This was followed by sessions on "Disasters in Maldives" facilitated by Officials from Maldives National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and "Coastline Monitoring using Google Earth Engine" by Mr. Shuaib Rasheed. The final session

The newly developed lab is equipped with high performance computers, hardware and software for cartography, mapping, modeling and simulation activities. In addition, professional drones and field equipment were procured to improve data collection and acquisition. The technical training sessions in the Maldives continued in the newly inaugurated lab facility.

of the day on "Mapping the flood risk exposure" was conducted by Dr. SIS. Subasinghe from University of Peradeniya.

The technical training sessions focusing on various topics and hands on exercises relating to geospatial technologies for disaster risk reduction and management continued in the next two days at MNU.

Day two of the training kicked off with a session by Mr. Ashvin Wickramasooriya from University of Peradeniya on landslide hazard analysis using GIS techniques followed by a session facilitated by Dr Yudi Setiawan from IPB University on estimating soil loss and sediment export using InVEST model. Afternoon sessions continued with the topic's 'Social capital mobilization on the context of Community Flood Disaster Management' by Dr. Ananda Karunaratne and Assessment of Surface Temperature of the City of Colombo, Using GIS and RS techniques by Prof. Lasantha Manawadu, from University of Colombo.

Day three of the training focused on 'City Resilience towards Coastal Hazards: An Integrated Bottom-Up and Top-Down Assessment' and 'Hotspot Mapping and Analysis in Nagan District, Aceh Province' facilitated by Dr. Rina Suryani Oktari from Syiah Kuala University. Afternoon session was delivered by Mr. Kyriakos Georgiou from University of Nicosia on the structuring of academic programmes in accordance with Bologna Process and European Qualifications Framework.



Technical training at the new Geospatial lab.



Departure to Dhigurah

## UN4DRR SESSIONS IN ALIF ALIF DHIGURAH ISLAND, MALDIVES

The rest of the training and management meetings continued at Alif Alif Atoll Dhigurah Island in the Maldives. The team arrived at Dhigurah on 31st January 2023 evening and was warmly welcomed by the Island Council President and team who assisted with the logistical arrangements.



UN4DRR team members attending the curriculum development workshop in Dhigurah.

Fourth day of the training was dedicated to the new e-learning curriculum and partners presentation and feedback of the courses developed. The session was facilitated by Kyriakos Georgiou from University of Nicosia and held at Alif Alif Dhigurah. The sessions concluded with the UN4DRR Management meetings.

The team also visited areas in the island and briefing from the council representatives to understand disasters related in the island context such as flooding and beach erosion. UN4DRR team is very grateful to the Dhigurah Council for the exceptional hospitality extended and assistance with the logistics during the stay at the island.

## LAUNCHING OF A SHORT COURSE ON FUNDAMENTALS OF GIS

A short professional development course on Fundamental of Geographic Information System (GIS) has been launched by the Maldives National University under the framework of UN4DRR project. The course was designed to introduce the fundamentals of GIS and use of GIS maps to explore spatial data. Participants will use GIS software to collect, analyse, visualize and interpret data about the surface of the earth and its geography. The mapping and spatial skills can be applied in various discipline of work and will be useful in decision making and planning processes

in related fields. This course is targeted at professionals already working in related areas where geomapping can be a useful tool to enhance their work.

The first batch of the course commenced on 29th January 2023 at the Maldives National University, Malé. Thirteen participants from various government offices and private parties registered for the course. This 16-hour course was offered in a blended mode of delivery with self-paced online theory sessions and in class practical sessions. Practical sessions of the course were held at the newly developed Geospatial Lab. The course was taught by lecturer Ahmed Aslam from the Faculty of Engineering, Science and Technology, MNU.

First batch of students of the short course on fundamentals of GIS

