

SERVIR Himalaya Youth Forum

Earth Observation: Empowering Youth for Climate Actions in the Himalayas

23-26 January 2012, Dhaka, Bangladesh



1. Background

Climate change is one of the most critical global concerns of this generation where the youth of the region will face enormous challenges in future. Raising awareness among youth and engaging them in action on the ground will be an important factor in addressing climate change in the Himalayas. Although young people are increasingly adding their voices globally to the call for action on climate change, awareness among the youth in the region is limited. It is important to actively engage them in areas of preparedness, risk reduction, adaptation and mitigation. Youths have innovative ideas and abundant energy to undertake local actions. They can play “agent for change” and act as effective communicators in their communities and be involved in regional and international arenas.

Earth observation is proving to be a vital tool to improve our understanding of the climate change phenomenon by providing information on the changes on various attributes which are indicators to climate change. The earth observation combined with geographic information systems provides a powerful platform and yet visual and interactive aid to address various issues related to environmental change. Educating and exposing the youth to such innovative tools and technologies will help them in better understanding of the climate change situations and use scientific approaches in advocacy. In this context, a National Youth Forum “Earth Observation: Empowering Youth for Climate Actions in the Himalayas” is being organized in Bangladesh. The Forum is being organized by ICIMOD in close collaboration with BCAS under the framework of the SERVIR-Himalaya Initiative supported by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and USAID.

2. Objectives

The objective of the Youth Forum is to educate (awareness raising) young people about climate change in the Himalaya through visual and interactive modern geospatial tools in order to enable them to take better and informed decisions for climate actions in the region. More specifically, it aims to:

- Familiarize youth with the potential benefits of information derived from earth observation;
- Learn basics of GIS/RS skills to understand climate change related issues through hands-on exercise and case study approach;
- Inspire youth through interaction with prominent environmentalist / resource persons from the region and beyond;
- Create a network of youth under the theme “earth observation and climate change”; and

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- Provide a platform for mutual sharing and learning of experiences among youth including online resources;

3. Intended Audience

The Youth Forum will be targeted to young professionals or students from Bangladesh (age group preferably from 18 – 25 years) with an interest in climate change issues. It is expected to involve about 30 - 40 youth with geographical coverage throughout Bangladesh. The Alumni youths from the previous SERVIR youth forums will also participate.

4. Expected outcome

The event is expected to bring the following outcome:

- Better understanding of climate change and linkages of the Himalaya and plains;
- Awareness among youth on benefits of earth observation for climate change related issues;
- Exposure of the youth on advanced tools like Satellite image interpretation
- Create a Youth network on earth observation and climate change

5. Selection Process

ICIMOD has received a large number of applications for the Youth Fora in 2010 and 2011. The participants were selected from the existing roster, from BCAS's network and Universities based on a number of criteria to ensure a balanced participation within Bangladesh.