The 14th UN Cartographic Conference for Asia & the Pacific held in Bangkok

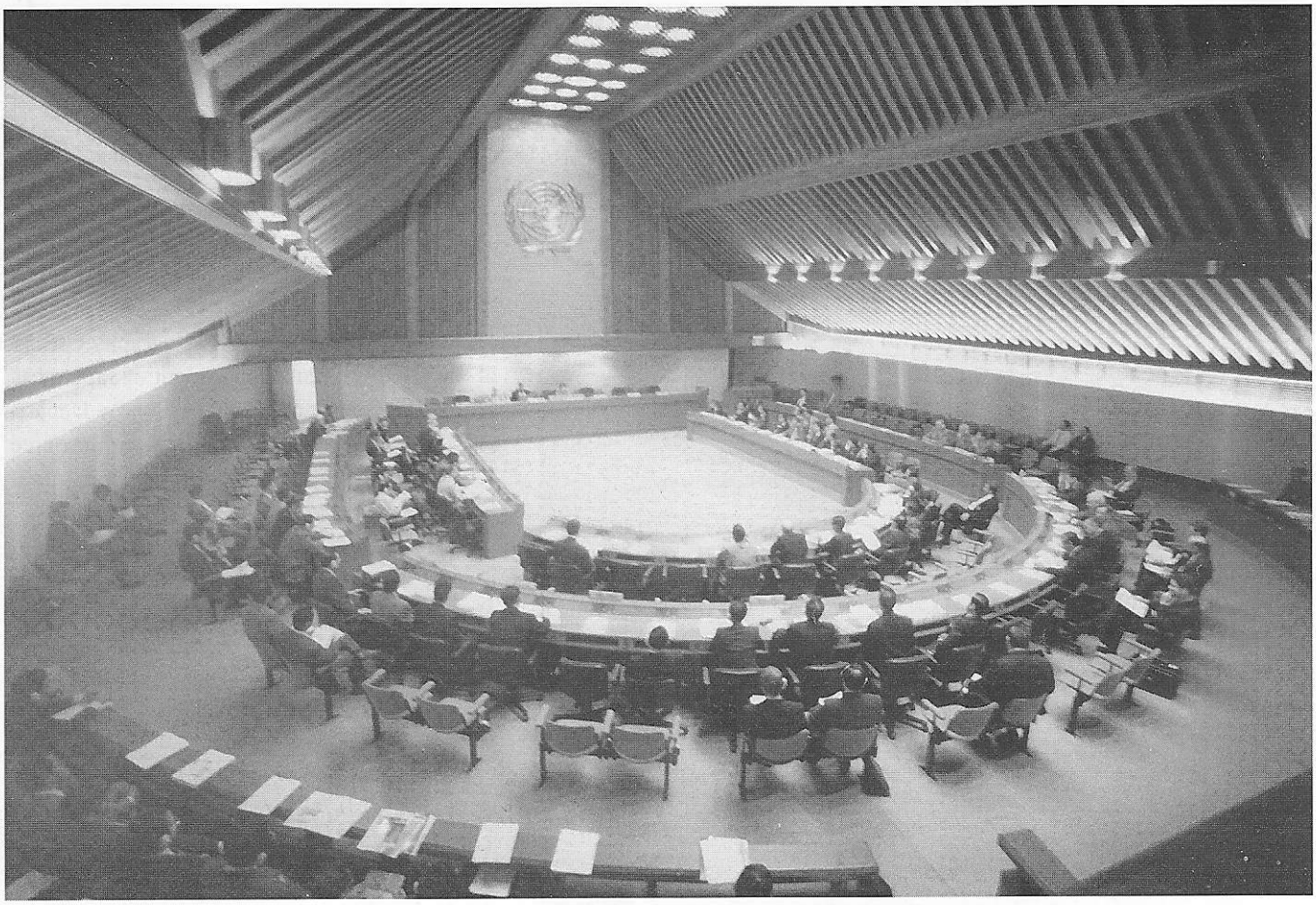
The 14th United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 3 to 7 February 1997.

The Conference was attended by a total of 154 representatives and observers from 30 countries and 5 international organizations. Mr. Jose Solis, Administrator of the Philippine National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), was elected as President of the Conference and Mr. K. Nonomura, Geographical Survey Institute of Japan, and Maj. Gen. T. Innadda, Thailand, as the First and Second Vice-Presidents, respectively. Among the representatives, participants from EAHC member HOs were Mr. Toshio Nagai, Head of Territorial Sea Baselines Research Office, Hydrographic Department of Japan, and Captain Narong Nagadhana, Director of Cartographic Division, Hydrographic Department, Royal Thai Navy.

The Conference established three technical committees: Committee I - Land Resources and Environmental Management, Committee II - Enabling Technologies, and Committee III - Policies and Management.

Among many discussions and papers submitted to the Conference, hydrographers were interested particularly in: Development of the Electronic Navigational Chart in Japan (Japan); Basic Map of the Sea in Continental Shelf Areas (Japan); The Digital Nautical Chart - A Multi-Use Data Base (USA); The Vector Product Format - An Overview (USA); Time-Invariant Bathymetry - A New Concept to Define and Survey It Using GPS (USA).

The Japan's paper on ENC covers the Electronic Navigational Chart (ENC), which was first produced on CD-ROM in accordance with IHO S-57, Ver. 2 in March 1995. The ENC is seamless and covers an area several thousand kilometers square. Four CD-ROMs have been produced so far at scales smaller than 1:100,000 covering the surrounding waters of Japan. Its paper on basic maps covers the production of Basic Maps of the Sea in Continental Shelf Areas, one set of which consists of four thematic charts; Bathymetric Chart, Submarine Structural Chart, Total Magnetic Anomaly Chart, and Free Air Gravity Anomaly Chart, produced at a scale of 1:1 mil. on the Mercator projection, showing the genesis of the island-arc and trench systems in the area.



Conference held at the headquarters of the UN Economic & Social Commission for Asia & the Pacific(ESCAP) in Bangkok, Thailand

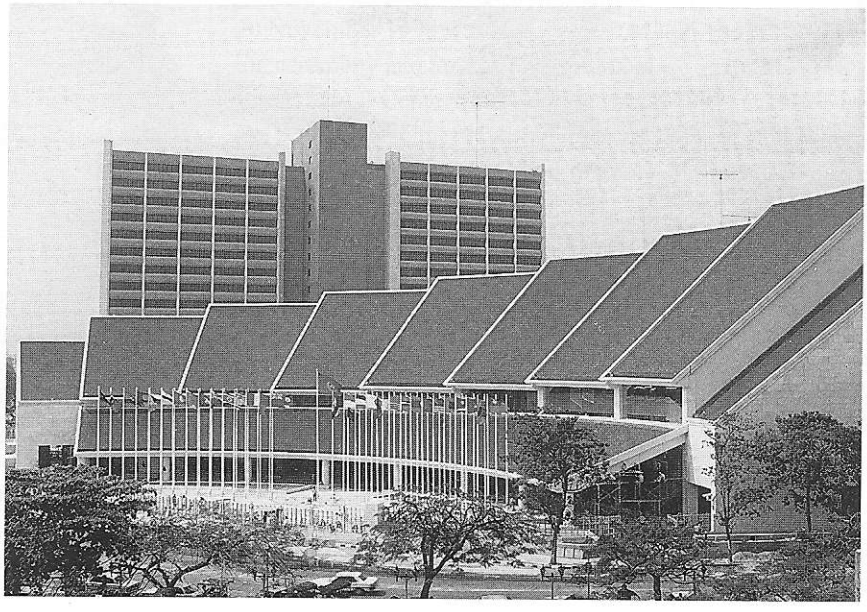
Japanese delegation: Second from the left on the front row, Mr. K. Nonomura (GSI) and third Mr. T. Nagai (JHD)

The United States presented a paper concerning the Digital Nautical Chart (DNC). The National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA) is required by law to make its products available to the civil sector that enhance safety of marine navigation. Vector Product Format (VPF), an implementation of the international Digest-C standard format adopted by NATO, covers a wide range of products available and planned such as 1:50,000 to 1:1 mil. multi-purpose data bases, littoral warfare data bases, special submarine navigation products, and navigation data bases supporting safe navigation. DNC was developed to satisfy international standards of IMO and IHO. NIMA is developing Full Utility Navigation Demonstration (FUND) software to familiarize users with DNC.

The US paper on VPF covers NIMA's digital geospatial products in three formats; VPF, Raster Product Format, and Text Product Format. Some available VPF products are Digital Chart of the World, World Vector Shoreline, Digital Nautical Chart, etc.

Another US paper addressed Time-Invariant bathymetry relating to chart vertical datum problems and a new concept in defining/surveying a time-invariant bathymetry using a high accuracy geoid as the new zero reference surface. This capability to compute a geoid of very high accuracy over ocean areas can define a nautical chart datum that is not dependent on time dependent tidal surfaces. Thus this geoid is proposed as the zero surface for nautical chart datum with all bathymetric data referenced thereto. This would eliminate the numerous existing local tidal datums, which is practical and realizable with current technology.

At its final meeting on 7 February 1997, the Conference adopted the provisional agenda for the next Conference, which is scheduled to be held in 2000.



Overall view of the Conference hall of ESCAP