



UN-SPIDER

February 2010 Updates

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<http://www.ungiwg.org/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/unspider>

UN-SPIDER News

1. SpaceAid supports response to Chile earthquake

On February 27, immediately after the 8.3-magnitude earthquake hit the Chilean coast, the UN-SPIDER SpaceAid framework started contributing to coordination with local partners and with the providers of space-based information and value-adding organizations, in order to help provide adequate support to the disaster relief community. UNOOSA activated the International Charter: Space and Major Disasters on behalf of the World Food Programme (WFP). The SpaceAid section of the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal is the platform providing information about the latest available space-based information, including satellite images, derived maps and related geospatial data of the affected areas. This section is continuously updated and information is made available to end users in the field as well as to the general public.

For accessing the latest available information >> [UN-SPIDER Chile](#)

2. UNOOSA partners with UNECA, UNEP, and RIT to examine the effects of the Global Economic Crisis on poverty through natural disasters impacts

UNOOSA working in partnership with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) has received a one year grant from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General's Rapid Impact and Vulnerability Analysis Fund (RIVAF) to examine the effects of the Global Economic Crisis (GEC) on poverty and vulnerability as revealed through natural disasters impacts in Africa. The GEC has created a set of unique, previously unexamined circumstances that have negatively affected livelihoods, creating increased poverty conditions and subsequent increased vulnerability to natural disasters. The team will use a variety of indicators such as household poverty figures, import/export figures of key African commodities (cotton, palm oil etc.), global remittances, changing land use/land cover patterns, and economic and social disaster impact data to understand GEC impacts on the poor and vulnerable. The research team will emphasize the development of visually-oriented analytical products such as combined geographic maps, timeline and data graphs in order to provide convincing analysis of the impacts of the GEC on the poor and/or vulnerable in order to support decision making processes within the broader Global Impact and Vulnerability Alert System (GIVAS).

For more information on this project or GIVAS >> voicesofthevulnerable.net

3. Two new UN-SPIDER Regional Support Offices in Pakistan and Ukraine

The network of Regional Support Offices (RSO) supporting the work of the UN-SPIDER Programme has two new members: the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) of Pakistan and the Space Research Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and the National Space Agency of Ukraine (SRI NASU-NSAU). Representatives of both institutions signed cooperation agreements with UNOOSA during the forty-seventh session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) on 10 January, 2010.

With these new members, UN-SPIDER now has seven RSOs. Five had already been set up in Algeria, the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre (ADRC) in Japan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nigeria, and Romania. It is worth mentioning that two additional institutions have expressed the intention to set up RSOs in the future, namely the University of West Indies for the Caribbean Region, and the Water Center for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean (CATHALAC) in Panama. Further institutions that are in the process of becoming a UN-SPIDER RSO are the new Disaster Management Center in South Africa, and the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

For additional information and links to existing RSOs >> [UN-SPIDER RSOs](#)

4. Follow-up activity in Namibia to further develop the Namibian SensorWeb Pilot Project on flood management and vector- and water-borne disease modeling

Following a range of activities - such as activations of the International Charter Space and Major Disasters in 2008 and 2009, a Technical Advisory Mission in February 2009, a technical expert meeting in Bonn in August 2009, and the 3rd International UN-SPIDER workshop in Bonn in October 2009 – UN-SPIDER together with the Department of Water Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry organized a follow-up activity *for a Flood Management Pilot Project* in Namibia in order to promote the access and use of space-based technologies and solutions for disaster management and emergency response within relevant communities. The activities in Windhoek were preceded by a visit to the Northern regions Caprivi and Oshana that were affected by the flood in 2009. Additionally, meetings with representatives of the Northern Regional Councils were arranged. Subsequently, after a technical meeting with stakeholders in Windhoek the mission team finally reported to a high-level debriefing committee.

For further information on the mission >> [UN-SPIDER News](#)

5. UN-SPIDER online: new developments on the Knowledge Portal, UN-SPIDER now on Facebook and Twitter

The UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal (KP) continues to grow and improve: one of the latest additions is a **better visibility of SpaceAid** on the front page. The links in this block will take the visitor directly to the latest disasters where SpaceAid is providing support. Furthermore, for the first time an **online registration** form has been created for the upcoming regional workshop in Addis Ababa (see below for details). As for the content compilation, the **institutions guides** have been updated and extended. They have also been rearranged and have been added a search function for easier navigation through the list. Finally, in the section "About us" you will now find the **profiles of the UN-SPIDER staff** including photos and the contact data of each staff member.

To see the latest changes on the KP >> [UN-SPIDER](#)

Taking into account the widespread use of social networks, UN-SPIDER now has a **Facebook profile** in order to reach a broader audience and raise awareness of its mandate and the work it is doing. You can also follow UN-SPIDER on Twitter. *To access the profiles >> [UN-SPIDER on Facebook](#), [UN-SPIDER on Twitter](#)*

6. UN-SPIDER appears on German TV network programme covering Haiti earthquake

On 7 February 2010, UN-SPIDER appeared in the "W wie Wissen" educational programme run by the German ARD TV network. The entire show zoomed in on the 7.2 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti on 12 January

2010, leaving a trail of utter destruction and devastation in its wake. National governments, military and nongovernmental organizations rushed the humanitarian assistance to Port au Prince immediately after the earthquake. However, securing fast and efficient response and recovery missions, as well as an effective and timely distribution of aid, required the provision of up-to-date space-based information and satellite imagery. At this point the programme drew attention to the work and role of UN-SPIDER. The programme also included an interview with Mr. Lóránt Czárán, Head of the UN-SPIDER Bonn Office, who outlined the importance of satellite images when it comes to saving lives and ensuring faster and more efficient recovery.

For further information and links to the TV show >> [UN-SPIDER News](#)

To see the show "W wie Wissen" online >> [ARD W wie Wissen](#)

7. Follow-up after the early response phase: UN-SPIDER continues support to Haiti

As reported in the January 2010 Updates, the UN-SPIDER SpaceAid framework was triggered on 12 January 2010 for the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti. It supported the international relief efforts by compiling, organizing and disseminating the latest available space-based information in the SpaceAid section of the Knowledge Portal. As a follow-up to the early response phase, in its capacity as UNGIWG co-chair, UNOOSA through UN-SPIDER is now coordinating an Ad hoc Haiti Geospatial Cooperation Task Group comprising UN Agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as other partners in order to ensure better communication among the various agencies that provide geospatial support to Haiti and to coordinate the work ahead. The group convenes by teleconference on a weekly basis. Furthermore, UN-SPIDER staff will visit Port au Prince in March on a technical assessment mission to meet with national and international personnel on the ground and to analyze the capabilities and needs concerning the use of space-based information for the recovery and reconstruction phase.

Community News

8. UN assisting Chile in aftermath of massive quake; including provision of satellite phones

Authorities in Chile have issued a request for supplies, including mobile bridges, satellite telephones, electric generators, water purification systems and dialysis centers. The United Nations is sending several satellite phones to Chile for officials coordinating earthquake relief efforts and is prepared to send 30 tons of food and other aid if the government gives the green light, the top UN representative for Latin America said Monday.

The UN is also waiting to hear whether the government of Chile wants the world body to launch a financial appeal to help the country recover from the massive quake, as it did after the recent earthquake in Haiti, Alicia Barcena, executive secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, told reporters at U.N. headquarters from her base in the Chilean capital, Santiago.

Chile's government is "well-organized to respond" to the crisis but has appealed to the U.N. and governments in the region and elsewhere for specific emergency needs, including temporary bridges, field hospitals, satellite phones, electric generators, damage assessment teams, water purification systems, field kitchens and dialysis centers, Barcena said.

For further information >> [UN News Center](#)

9. Space Agencies of Ukraine and Germany discuss cooperation on data exchange in remote earth-sensing

NSAU experts and specialists of space industry enterprises of Ukraine paid a working visit to German Aerospace Centre (DLR), leading research institutes and companies of the space spectrum of Germany in the framework of Twinning Space project from 1 to 6 February 2010 in order to define further perspectives of bilateral cooperation. The main topic of the meetings was the present collaboration and cooperation prospects between NSAU and DLR in the field of exploration and peaceful use of outer space. In particular, they discussed

the possible serving of satellite information in crisis situations from the German Remote Sensing Data Center (DFD, DLR subdivision) to the Ukrainian side via the Internet, a source told Interfax-Ukraine.

For further information >> [NSAU, Kyiv Post](#)

10. United Nations University and ESRI to collaborate on GIS research and training

ESRI and United Nations University (UNU) recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) at the University's headquarters in Tokyo, Japan. They will collaborate on research, create Centers of Excellence, promote the exchange of graduate students, and provide geographic information system (GIS) training opportunities within and by UNU. "This agreement will promote enhanced spatial information use in UNU's research and education initiatives," said UNU rector and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations professor Konrad Osterwalder. "It will also support the increased presence of young researchers at UNU campuses and complement existing and planned research and education programs".

For further information >> [GIS and Science](#)

11. RADARSAT-2 improvements to enhance Earth Observation applications and utilizations

RADARSAT-2's revolutionary design enables the satellite flexibility to be up-dated, reconfigured and additional beam modes added to accommodate the world's ever changing needs. Since its launch in 2007, the following up-dates have been made: The License for RADARSAT-2 restrictions on beam mode resolution were relaxed, with the beam modes now matching the full resolution of the current RADARSAT-2 beam modes. What this entails is that certain users can now receive finer resolution products for the Spotlight, Ultra-Fine and Quad-Pol beam modes. Additional Ultra-Fine beam options covering incidence angles from 20 to 30 degrees are now part of the RADARSAT-2 offerings, which permit the use of the fine beam mode for a greater range of applications including oil seep and oil spill detection, as well as greater revisit options improving fine beam mode monitoring capabilities. These improvements are particularly evident in the Spotlight, Ultra-Fine and Quad-Pol images. RADARSAT-2 continues to maintain its position as the world's most advanced commercial C-Band Synthetic Aperture Radar satellite with more exciting upgrades and changes to come in 2010.

For further information >> [Earth Observation Express No.41](#)

12. Mexican Relief Organizations Expand Use of Iridium in Haiti Recovery Efforts

Iridium Communications Inc., together with service partner Tecnologias de Control del Norte (TECNOR), announced today that the Mexican Red Cross, the United Nations and multiple other Mexican government agencies have increased their usage of Iridium 9555 satellite phones in support of Haiti relief and recovery efforts. These TECNOR customers had the ability to make their Iridium phones and service operational within minutes of arriving in Haiti for use following the January 2010 earthquake, which made land-based and cellular communications unavailable. "Instant communications play a vital role in our ongoing disaster relief and recovery efforts," said Isaac Oxenhaut, national disaster relief coordinator of the Mexican Red Cross. "The Mexican Red Cross is using Iridium service for reliable, real-time communications between our team in Haiti and our headquarters in Mexico." (Globe Newswire via COMTEX)

For further information >> [tradingmarkets](#)

13. Communications between 'first responders' in Haiti to be strengthened – ITU

A United States software business is set to provide a reliable and secure communications system to emergency response teams assisting in the Haitian relief effort under an agreement with the United Nations, the UN International Telecommunications Union (ITU) announced today. As part of the new agreement with the ITU, the United States-based Collabria LLC will install a platform which allows Haitian 'first responders' to collaborate quickly across wired, wireless and private networks, as well as the Internet amidst the devastation left by the 7.0-magnitude earthquake.

For further information >> [United Nations](#)

Conferences and Workshops

We maintain a Calendar of Events with upcoming Conferences, Meetings and Events relevant to the area of space-based solutions for disaster management and emergency response. The Calendar can be viewed at:

www.un-spider.org/events

Conference on current legal issues for satellite earth observation, 8-9 April 2010, Vienna, Austria

This Conference deals with two important and topical aspects of satellite Earth observation: treaty monitoring and law enforcement through satellite Earth observation, privacy conflicts from high resolution imagery. It brings together experts from the remote sensing and in the legal fields. It i. a. aims at decision-makers in the field of treaty monitoring and international law enforcement (foreign and environment ministries, international organizations). This provides the unique opportunity to discuss the different implications stemming from the technology developments and applications as well as from legal and regulatory perspectives. The focus of the discussions at this Conference is to optimise the regulatory framework for satellite Earth observation thus supporting the full implementation of its potentials.

For more information: [ESPI](#)

International Training Course on Application of Space Technology for Disaster Management Support with Emphasis on Geological Risk Management, 12 April – 07 May 2010, Dehradun, India

The course will take place from 12 April until 07 May, the venue is the Indian Institute for Remote Sensing, Dehradun, India, and is organized by the UN-affiliated CSSTEAP, the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, and ITC.

For more information: [CSSTEAP](#)

Upcoming UN-SPIDER Outreach Activities

Information on upcoming UN-SPIDER outreach activities can be obtained from the events section of the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal:

www.un-spider.org/events

Upcoming UN-SPIDER events

UN-SPIDER Regional Workshop Building upon Regional Space-based Solutions for Disaster Management and Emergency Response for Africa, 25-28 May 2010, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Recognizing the fact that the African continent is particularly prone to devastating natural disasters and susceptible to the negative effects of climate change, UN-SPIDER is organising this continental wide workshop aiming at bringing together experts from both the disaster management and the geospatial communities. The regional workshop is intended to further strengthen capacities in Africa to better respond to future disasters by taking advantage of space-based information. Information on this workshop will be sent out during the second week of February.

For more information and registration: [UN-SPIDER Events](#)

Upcoming events supported by UN-SPIDER

Fourth Central Asia GIS Conference - GISCA 2010 *Water: Life, Risk, Energy and Landuse*, 27-28 May 2010, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

The Austria-Central Asia Centre for GIScience at the Kyrgyz State University of Construction, Transportation and Architecture, and the Centre for Geoinformatics (Z_GIS), University of Salzburg, Austria are proud to announce the 4th GIS-in-Central-Asia Conference - GISCA 2010. The main objectives of this conference are to bring together GIS academics, researchers and practitioners in the Central Asian countries and encourage international cooperation and knowledge exchange in GIS education.

In 2010, GISCA is focused on the main theme of WATER:

- Life: WATER for drinking and agriculture
- Risk: WATER posing a threat to settlements
- Energy: WATER for renewable hydropower
- Landuse: WATER controlling regional landuse

For more information and registration: [gisca10](http://gisca10.kstu.kg)

Second Ukrainian conference *Earth Observations for Sustainable Development and Security* (GEO/GMES – Ukraine), 14-17 June 2010, Kyiv, Ukraine

A UN-SPIDER related Special Session (Workshop) will be held during the conference. Further information and registration forms will be published as soon as they are available.

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) implements the decisions of the General Assembly and of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its two Subcommittees, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee. The Office is responsible for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, and assisting developing countries in using space science and technology. Headquartered in Vienna, Austria, UNOOSA maintains a website at <http://www.unoosa.org>.

In its resolution 61/110 of 14 December 2006 the United Nations General Assembly agreed to establish the "United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response - UN-SPIDER" as a programme within UNOOSA. UN-SPIDER focuses on the need to ensure access to and use of space-based solutions during all phases of the disaster management cycle.