



UN-SPIDER August 2008 Updates

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

1. UN-SPIDER Workshop Leads to Successful Volcanic Crisis Observation in Montserrat

On 26 July 2008, seismic activity at the Soufriere Hills Volcano started to increase in Montserrat, a British Overseas Territory in the Caribbean. There was a strong possibility that an explosion had caused instability to the dome, endangering inhabited areas of the island. Roderick Stewart, Acting Director of MVO, requested assistance from the scientific community, including his fellow participants at the recent UN-SPIDER workshop for the Caribbean region, in order to obtain satellite imagery of the Volcano.

The assistance obtained led to several satellite imagery acquisitions and the activation of the International Charter "Space and Major Disasters." The imagery data allowed MVO to determine that the lava dome had not been destabilized by the explosion. As a result, the Government of Montserrat was able to save valuable resources by cancelling an evacuation that had been ordered. Reviewing the chain of events that led to this positive outcome, Mr. Stewart remarked, "I would particularly like to thank the forces that got me to the UN-SPIDER meeting in Barbados. None of this would have happened if I hadn't been there."

Full story at:

<http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/unspider/index.html>

2. UN OCHA-ROWA Requests UNOOSA to Trigger International Charter for Togo Floods

As of 30 July 2008 over 10,000 people were affected by recent flooding in Togo. Six deaths were reported in the southern region. Nine bridges were reported to be ruptured, and roads and railways were impracticable, which caused a lack of access to entire communities, isolating the northern region from the south. In addition, some 400 houses had collapsed and the telephone network was also cut in some flooded areas.

Faced with this situation, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Regional Office for West Africa (ROWA) decided to request the activation of the International Charter "Space and Major Disasters" through the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs. A staff member of OCHA-ROWA had previously attended the "West African Regional Workshop on UN-SPIDER and the Role of the International Charter in Disaster Management" held in Abuja, Nigeria from 21 to 22 May 2008. Subsequently, value added-maps were made available to OCHA-ROWA through the Charter. The German Aerospace Agency - Center for Satellite Based Crisis Information (ZKI), although not a member of this mechanism, also came forward and provided TerraSAR-X imagery to the Charter Project Manager.

For more information:

http://www.disasterscharter.org/disasters/CALLID_214_e.html

3. Netherlands Inaugurate Mobile Laboratory to Support UN Environmental Emergency Response

A mobile laboratory developed by the Netherlands to support international response to environmental emergencies was officially inaugurated. The modular unit, known as the Environmental Assessment Module (EAM), can be rapidly deployed for disasters involving hazardous substances. One vehicle contains a mobile measurement and analysis unit, while another contains materials for logistical support such as satellite equipment and GPS. The EAM will be supported by a knowledge network of research institutions and Ministries in the Netherlands. The EAM will be deployed only at the request

of the UN or other international organisations wishing to make use of the expertise it provides. Countries themselves may also ask the Netherlands for help directly.

Full story at:

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/LSGZ-7HMBX2>

4. Red Cross Welcomes IT and Telecommunications Emergency Response Unit in New Zealand

The Red Cross is about to get the final go ahead for its new emergency communications unit which can be deployed to disasters anywhere in the world. The Wellington-based Red Cross IT and Telecommunications Emergency Response Unit will be one of only five in the world and the only one in the southern hemisphere. The unit embraced high frequency (HF), very high frequency (VHF) radios, satellite communications, the internet and its own power supplies. The unit would also be self sufficient with food and cooking facilities and water purification units.

Full story at: <http://www.odt.co.nz/news/national/15373/red-cross-welcomes-emergency-unit>

For more information: <http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/responding/drs/tools/eru.asp>

5. Satellite Phone Missions Keep Thousands in Touch with the Outside World

The Guardian has written an interesting article about Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF) and its founder Jean-François Cazenave. TSF has been out on more than 70 missions and now has 20 full-time staff. TSF has expanded its operations in recent years, not just setting up communications hubs for NGOs, but also using the latest generation of satellite phones - which provide internet and send pictures - to put people in remote areas in touch with distant medical facilities.

Full story at:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2008/aug/26/telecoms.france>

6. Nigeria to Use Space Technology to Fight Flood Disaster

Nigeria's Minister of Science and Technology, Mrs. Grace Ekpiwhre, said agencies in her country like the National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA) and the Centre For Remote Sensing will be willing to work with the Federal Ministry of Environment and Urban Development, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), and other agencies to develop early warning and monitoring systems for sustainable environmental development. Mrs Ekpiwhre added that NASRDA and the National Centre for Remote Sensing produced a settlement map of Nigeria and a digital elevation model, and that they are currently working to produce a national land-use/land-cover mapping at the scale of 1:100,000 using NigeriaSat-1.

Full story at:

<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/news/v.php?id=3301>

7. European Commission Reveals Pan-European Satellite Plan

The European Commission has opened up the selection procedure for a new pan-European satellite project. Operators will be able to offer high-speed data, mobile TV, disaster relief and remote medical services under a single selection procedure rather than go through 27 administrations, as has previously been the case. The announcement follows the EU's earlier decision on mobile satellite services that came into force last month. The licence for spectrum in the 2GHz bands could come into force as early as 2009. Interested companies have until October 7, 2008 to submit their applications with the selection procedure taking place in the first part of 2009.

Full story at:

<http://www.broadbandtvnews.com/?p=6516>

8. IIT Kanpur to develop Micro Satellite

In an effort to enhance the flow of information pertaining to disaster management, the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur is set to develop a micro satellite in collaboration with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). The Micro satellite will give accurate information on the nation's agricultural situation and transmit warnings about natural calamities like floods and famine which would be helpful in disaster management. It will also act as a communicating device for other space satellites. The satellite will be based on indigenous technology and the project will take about 18 months to complete. It will then be handed over to ISRO for launch.

Full story at:

<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/008200808031140.htm>

9. Job Opportunity: Programme Officer (P-4), UN-SPIDER Beijing Office

The rapidly expanding UN-SPIDER programme is currently recruiting a new head for its upcoming office in Beijing. The activities to be carried out by the future Beijing Office include: the development, implementation and coordination of awareness raising activities, the development and updating of regional and country profiles, support to national activities including the establishment of national disaster management planning and policies with regard to the use of space-based solutions and information, the coordination of technical advisory missions to interested Member States, as well as activities to be carried out in collaboration with the future liaison office in Geneva and activities to be carried out in collaboration with the established Network of Regional Support Offices.

Official posting at:

https://jobs.un.org/galaxy/release3/vacancy/Display_Vac.aspx?lang=1200&VACID=d8b40652-350e-4249-a566-b214c4f3ace6

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:

<http://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=h1a93vb3rk6ud1tvrequisfik8s%40group.calendar.google.com>

“First International Conference on Remote Sensing Techniques in Disaster Management and Emergency Response in the Mediterranean Region” in Zadar, Croatia, 22-24 September 2008

The Conference will cover several stages in risk management, such as knowledge, prevention, warning, management of emergency situations, post-analysis of crisis, and environmental rehabilitation. The Conference is jointly organised by EARSeL, the Scientific Council for Remote Sensing-Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, University of Zadar and GEOSAT Ltd., Zagreb.

More information at:

<http://www.earsel.geosat.hr/>

“GeOnG 2008: 1st Forum on Geomatic for Humanitarian Services” in Chambéry, France, 25-26 September 2008

The primary objective of this Forum, hosted by CartONG, is for GIS technicians to acquaint, meet and exchange working methods in order to create a network between people using geomatics in a humanitarian and development context. CartONG also plans to launch an exchange platform in order to harmonize geographic data with the goal of streamlining interventions and operating costs.

More information at:

http://www.cartong.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=section&id=15&Itemid=107

Segundo Curso Internacional CRECTEALC – Campus Brasil – Nodo Ecuador: “La Geoinformación en el Manejo de Cuencas Hidrográficas: Movimientos Gravitacionales de Ladera en regiones Andinas” in Quito, Ecuador, 27-31 Octubre 2008

El programa preliminar y el formulario de inscripción están en la página del Campus Brasil/CRECTEALC:

More information at:

<http://www.inpe.br/unidades/cep/atividadescep/crectalc/inicial.htm>

“Use of Remote Sensing Techniques for Monitoring Volcanoes and Seismogenic Areas - USEReST 2008” in Naples, Italy, 11-13 November 2008

The focus will be on the operational use of Earth Observation data in real monitoring scenarios rather than on new scientific results. The user community is called to indicate the technological gaps that may limit the full exploitation of EO data in everyday monitoring practice; the developer community is expected to indicate the new operational features likely attainable in the near future.

More information at:
<http://www.userest.org/>

“International Symposium Geotunis 2008 – 3rd Edition” in Tunis, Tunisia, 26-30 November 2008

The theme of the conference is: "Natural resource management and study of the impact of climate change with geographic information systems, science and space technologies."

More information at:
http://www.geotunis.org/version_ang/index.php

Upcoming UN-SPIDER Outreach Activities

Further information on the following planned workshops can be obtained from the outreach activities section of the UN-SPIDER webpage: <http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/unspider/workshops.html>

Second United Nations International UN-SPIDER Bonn Workshop: "Disaster Management and Space Technology - Bridging the Gap" in Bonn, Germany, 13-15 October 2008

"5th UN-wide Meeting on the Use of Space Technologies for Emergency Response and Humanitarian Assistance" in Bonn, Germany, 16 to 17 October 2008

UN-SPIDER Regional Workshops/Activities Supported by UNOOSA

“Iranian Space Agency/UN-SPIDER Regional Workshop: Building Upon Regional Space-based Solutions for Disaster Management and Emergency Response” Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 6-8 October 2008.

Organized by the Iranian Space Agency (ISA).

For more information please contact: Mr. Saman Jalayerian E-mail: Jalayerian@isa.ir

“L’Outi Spatial au Service de la Gestion des Catastrophes et des Situations d’Urgence en Afrique” – Rabat, Morocco, 10-12 November 2008.

Organized by the Centre Régional Africain des Sciences et Technologies de l’Espace en Langue Française (CRASTE-LF, Rabat, Maroc).

For more information please contact: Mr. Abdelhaq Trache E-mail: trache@emi.ac.ma

*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.*